University of Alberta

Refugee Families with Preschool Children: Transition to Life in Canada

by

Darcey M. Dachyshyn

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Canada

At first the beauty of the melodies and of the interwoven words in elventongues, even though he understood them little, held him in a spell, as soon as he began to attend to them. Almost it seemed that the words took shape, and visions of far lands and bright things that he had never yet imagined opened out before him; and the firelit hall became like a golden mist above seas of foam that sighed upon the margins of the world. (Tolkien)

Abstract

The belief that people dwell in communities of practice from which they derive a sense of belonging, find meaning for their lives, gain knowledge and skills, and form their identities, provides the theoretical grounding for this research. Refugee families, suddenly displaced from their familiar communities of practice and transplanted into new ones, are forced to navigate sudden changes. Refugee parents from seven ethnocultural communities describe these changes within the parameters of eight key settlement issues they encounter in Edmonton, Alberta. This general knowledge of the lived experience of resettlement provides the background necessary to a further exploration of the resettlement process as it pertains to preschool children, specifically the way the learning of preschool refugee children is guided and mediated during the time of transition to life in this new location.

The "developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice," formulated on Piagetian and Eriksonian stage theories, dominates our early learning and care discourse and practice. While the move to reconceptualize early childhood practice has been underway for some time, the unique aspect of this research is the problematizing, deconstructing, and reconceptualizing of developmentally appropriate practice within the context of refugee resettlement. I believe the field of early childhood must become open to other ways of being in the world with young children. The movement of increasing numbers of refugee families into the Canadian context is an opportune time to reassess and revision how and why we interact with preschool children. The data provided by the three Sudanese mothers and sons, and

three early childhood educators involved in this research presents a beginning look at some possibilities.

To Evan

In hope that one day, the world will be more equitable and you will no longer need wonder why all the homeless people are brown and all the cab drivers black.

Love Mom

Preface

Having completed the writing of this dissertation, I feel I am now finally ready to begin. I wish I had somehow been better prepared for the task; immersion however seems the only way. So it is for refugee families in the process of resettlement, they no doubt wish there had been some way to prepare or at least anticipate what was to come, but such is not the case. Moreover, just as for me, there are changes I would make to the way I undertook certain aspects of this work were I to start over, I know refugee families feel the same. One research participant replied when I asked how they would like me to use the information they provided,

> *You can share it with whoever you want, since it's for academic purposes, for the government or for other institutions of learning so that our children and those that are still coming will fit in well, to find strategies and methods to improve what could not be done well some times.*

Hope often lies in finding a better way for others, and it is with this in mind that people offered themselves eagerly to the project. I feel tremendous gratitude towards the parents, children, and early childhood professionals who participated in this research. Numerous newcomers to Canada opened their hearts and memories and welcomed me into their lives, and many more children than those who appear in the final analysis contributed to my learning.

Finally, I wish to pay special tribute to the three early childhood educators who participated. It is not easy to offer oneself for viewing knowing the observer is looking "to find strategies and methods to improve what could not be done well some times." I offer here, not judgement of these women as individuals, but rather critique of the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice they represent.

Expressions of Gratitude

While I agree with the common adage, "It takes a community to raise a child," I offer that, "It takes many communities to complete a PhD!" It is with much gratitude and a sense of accomplishment that I offer here my thanks to the many communities who have contributed to the completion of this undertaking.

Thank you to the newcomers to Canada who opened your hearts and welcomed me into your lives. You entrusted your experiences to me and in return, you asked that I share them with others, "So that our children and those that are still coming will fit in well, to find strategies and methods to improve what could not be done well sometimes." I promise I will do my best.

I am inspired by the dedication of cultural brokers and settlement professionals working alongside newcomers in our city. Thank you especially to the Multicultural Family Connections team (ASSIST Community Services Centre, Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative, and Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers); may there continue to be opportunities to learn together.

To the staff of Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers I owe special thanks. You welcomed me warmly and continue to offer me a place where I can be who I am in ways that bring deep meaning and satisfaction to my life.

The academic community holds many members who supported this work. To my colleagues in Secondary Education and Dr. David Smith, where this journey began, thank you for those heady times of immersion in new ideas and ways of seeing the world. To my colleagues in Elementary Education, thank you for staying the course and offering inspiration and encouragement.

Dr. Anna Kirova, you have been so much more than supervisor. You have and continue to be mentor, friend, and touchstone. Thank you for your tactfulness and patience as I found my way.

For your helpful comments and challenging questions, I thank my committee members, Dr. Larry Prochner, Dr. Michael Emme, Dr. Tracey Derwing, Dr. Lynn McGarvey, and Dr. Mehrunnisa Ali.

To the Stalkers and Angelstads, thank you for the gift of family.

To friends too numerous to mention; I thank you for always being there. I never felt I was alone.

Evan, my son, I thank you for keeping me balanced.

In bringing finality to these thanks, I end with the person who has journeyed with me many years during the evolution of becoming the person able to undertake this project. Thank you to Dr. J. Rowan Scott for your wisdom. Without you, none of this was possible.

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Chapter 1 - Refugees in Canada

We were very comfortable; we had relatives, houses, and husbands. Some of us belonged to wealthy, well-known families. Now we are having trouble raising our children while migrating from one place to the other.

(Afghan refugee)

It is estimated that worldwide there are 11.3 million refugees; 7.3 million who have lived in refugee camps or other segregated settlements for 10 years or more, and 23.6 million internally displaced persons (McGrath, Derwing, Renaud, Aiken, Gupta, n.d.). In this research, the United Nations *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* is used as the determining definition of a refugee.

> [A refugee is a person who] owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [*sic*] nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself [*sic*] of the protection of that country. (UNHCR, 1996)

Of the 192 member states of the United Nations, 16 maintain refugee resettlement quotas (UNHCR, 2006a). Canada, as one of these countries, received over 35,000 convention refugees within its borders in 2005 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). This amounts to 13.6% of the nation's total immigration. Edmonton, Alberta the site of this inquiry receives approximately 700 new refugees into the city each year. As is the case with the Afghan woman quoted above, many adult refugees struggle to parent their children as they find themselves displaced from home, climate, surroundings, and family members. Suddenly relocated to a strange place, surrounded by different people, a new language, an unfamiliar home, and a new way of life, how do refugee families with young children cope?

The Context

Recent experiences in my work with refugee parents and preschool children now living in Edmonton cause me to wonder what life is like for refugee families once they arrive in Canada. For instance, while visiting with a Swahili speaking family in their home, the youngest child, under age two, is the only one to speak to me in English. How is it that she has come to feel comfortable in this new language more quickly than her other family members? While acknowledging English competency is essential to this young girl's future, at the same time I worry about what dynamics may develop between her and members of her family as she becomes proficient in English more quickly than them.

Somali families say their children experience more racism here in Edmonton than they did while living in Vancouver, Toronto, or Montreal. Why is this? What makes our city so different; why are Edmonton-born children seemingly less accepting of "others" than children born in larger urban centres? What is happening or not happening in our schools and preschool centres that results in refugee children being subjected to racism?

Eritrean women lament the loss of the 40-day postpartum care they receive from family and friends when living in their homeland. Cambodian mothers on the other hand feel there is more support available to them in Canada as parents than there was in Cambodia. A Canadian father "stands guard" with the phone disconnected, at his wife's request, so they are not disturbed by family and friends upon the birth of their first child. What has led to these various ways and expectations for newborn care? Why do some parents wish to be alone with their newborn, while others expect extended involvement and support from family and friends? How do families with such diverse expectations continue to parent in the Canadian context?

Kurdish women who entered a refugee camp in Iraq as children and left 23 years later as married women with children of their own, long to be able to provide their families with all the material possessions and opportunities of their Canadian counterparts. An ability to provide their children with all the "things" they see around them is what they find distinctive of "good parenting" in Canada. What did they value as parents all those years when they had no access to material possessions and opportunities? What place do those earlier values have in the Canadian context?

Afghan mothers wonder how, when the time comes for their sons to marry, they will be able to tell which Canadian young women are eligible and which are not. In their culture only married women pluck their eyebrows, here both married and unmarried women are "allowed" to. How will they know which young women they might approach as potential partners for their sons? Now living in Canada, what part will a parent play in the selection of a spouse for their son or daughter?

These and countless many more instances of culturally diverse ways of being-in-the-world occur repeatedly in this country. Represented above are a few of the expressed or easily discernable distinctions. What about the unspoken, subtle, and subconscious differences? What about the myriad of different ways parents or caregivers and children interact? We have "our ways" of promoting the learning of "our" children. Do other cultures have equally exclusive ways? Are some ways compatible? Are some ways incompatible? What becomes of the indigenous childrearing practices of a refugee family now living in Canada?

I wonder especially about the effects of migration upon the youngest members of refugee families. A young refugee couple expresses concern that their nine-month-old daughter cannot be away from them for even the shortest time without becoming distressed. I remind them that they have only been in Canada for three months; they are all their daughter knows, they are the only familiar and consistent elements in her life. They relax and acknowledge that perhaps she requires more time to adjust. How will this couple and numerous others continue to navigate the challenges of parenting young children in a new culture? How will the children be affected by this transition?

Why Me?

The reasons for my interest in this topic may not be immediately apparent. One may ask why a white, middle-class, monolingual, third generation Canadian is concerned with refugee children and their families. The personal motivation behind this research is that I am the mother of an adopted son of Indigenous heritage. When my son was seventeen-months-old, we attended an event where his ancestral drumming and dancing was taking place. As he listened and observed he would become agitated whenever the drumming ceased for even the shortest time and seemed most content when we were situated as close as possible to the drummers. At home later that day, while seated on the floor, he picked up his toy plastic hammer and began “chanting” while beating out the rhythm of the drumming he had heard earlier in the day. Perhaps this incident is of no great consequence, and could be expected of any child, but it caused me to wonder if something in my son predisposes him to feel a bond with his ancestors? Beyond facilitating ongoing relationships with his birth family, as a non-indigenous person, how do I help him maintain connections with his heritage? How do I foster his identity as someone who is of mixed Indigenous and British ancestry, since I share neither of these identities? My wonderments in raising my own son draw me into an affinity with families new to Canada. Just as I strive to support and teach my son in ways that honour his indigenous knowing, how do newcomers to Canada do the same for their children?

My interest in the lives of refugee families with preschool children is also professional. Throughout my career as an early childhood educator, I have had various opportunities to work with diverse populations. Some years ago while involved as a researcher in a project that undertook to provide resources to daycare centres serving families with a variety of ethnic backgrounds, I became aware that our concern ought not be with "ethnicity" alone, but rather "diversity" in all its forms. Most recently, as one of a team of early childhood educators at an immigrant and refugee settlement agency in Edmonton, I have come to appreciate the depth of learning available to me through opportunities for ongoing interaction with culturally diverse parents and children.

This personal and professional motivation towards "valuing diversity" led me in Phase 1 of this study to undertake research with parents of preschool children from seven ethnocultural refugee communities now living in Edmonton. Parents representing the Afghan, African French speaking (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and Djibouti), Cambodian, Eritrean, Kurdish, Somali, and Sudanese communities were involved in the research. Far from providing me with a homogeneous snapshot of the refugee experience of parenting preschool children in this new location, after completing this phase I was left with a widened perspective on the complexity of the issues involved. I was also left with a strong sense of urgency concerning the need for further research that involves refugee families with preschool children. This led in Phase 2 of this investigation to describing and analysing the way early childhood artefacts are used, by both parents and early childhood professionals, to guide and mediate the learning of three Sudanese preschool children.

While it remains important to investigate the situations faced by all immigrant communities, the scope of this study concentrates on refugees. This research addresses the gap not only in terms of our knowledge about how these families adjust to the new culture, but also in terms of our understanding of their child rearing practices while in the process of transition and adjustment to their new context. Such an understanding is crucial to providing culturally sensitive educational experiences for these preschool children when they enter Canadian early childhood services outside their homes.

Early Childhood Assumptions Interrupted

As an early childhood educator I have been taught, and in turn teach others, the ways and means considered "appropriate" to foster the growth and development of preschool children. These "best practices," referred to as "developmentally appropriate practices" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), are not only widespread within the early childhood profession, they can be witnessed as central to the practices of many Canadian parents. An example of such is evident in a chance encounter observed between a Canadian father and his five-month-old son. As another adult held the infant on her lap while seated on a park bench, the father passed by behind the bench and observed his son's out-stretched hand. The father, taking notice of this gesture, presumed his son was reaching out to touch the back of the bench. He stopped, knocked on the wooden bench saying, "That's wood son, wood!"

Several things I note in this encounter; first, the father chose to stop and interact with his son. He had two other children playing in the playground for whom he was also responsible, someone else was caring for the infant at the time, yet he could not simply walk past, he felt compelled to stop and interact. Second, he assumed the child's arm extending towards the back of the park bench was an intentional act; that the child was indeed reaching to touch the wooden bench. Third, the father chose to point out the properties of the object being reached for; he knocked on it to demonstrate the solidness of it. Finally, the child was provided the word, the label, for the object he was presumably reaching for.

I was struck by how typical this brief interaction is of developmentally appropriate practice. I would consider this father very attentive, a "good parent" who is committed to teaching his son. He took notice of his son and made him the centre of his attention, he followed the child's lead, and he gave him language to go with his actions. The words used, or the nature of what is brought to the child's attention might differ between individuals, for example, someone else might have talked about the feel of the park bench, or presumed the child was reaching out to them and stopped to touch the child's hand. None the less, according to developmentally appropriate practice, as adults we are "supposed" to take notice, stop what we are doing, and interact with the child “at their level,” using language as well as physical presence. Certainly, not every adult will take such notice and stop to involve themselves in the social, cognitive, and linguistic development of children, but as an early childhood educator I have been led to believe every adult “should” interact with young children in this way; that this is “the” developmentally appropriate way of interacting with young children.

My observations of parent and child interactions among the various cultural groups I work with lead me to ask, is the developmentally appropriate practice way of interacting with young children, so common to me and to many people in the Canadian context, to be found in all cultures? Furthermore, is developmentally appropriate practice in fact helpful or is it a hindrance to families concerned with maintaining their indigenous culture and language? Several experiences cause me to pause and wonder; what effect is had upon refugee preschool children and their families when we impose upon them developmentally appropriate practice ways of guiding or mediating children’s learning?

While a guest at a Kurdish New Year celebration I observed a young Kurdish woman, presiding over the opening speeches, imploring the adults in the room, numerous times, to gather up their young children from the large open area in the middle of the room (which would later become the dance floor) and quiet them down. Parents seemed oblivious to any concern. Following the nationalistic speeches calling for a Kurdish homeland there was an announcement of a different sort; the singer for the evening was introduced. The entire gathering erupted with cheers! Suddenly, not a child was spotted on the space now designated the dance floor. “Now” was the time to act so the youth and adults of the community could get underway with the main event. I did not see individual parents telling their children to move out of the way as the long, colourful, weaving lines of adults began forming; everyone, adults and children alike, simply "knew" this is what was to happen. How was this communicated; how was this known; how had the children learned this expectation? How might the way parents and children experienced this celebration have differed if children had been made to obey the request for calm and order, and return to the tables where their parents were seated long before the dancing began?

During a field trip to the local zoo with a multicultural group of parents and their preschool children, while standing at the entrance gate facilitating and supporting parents as they paid the fee for entering the zoo, I noticed two parents who had accompanied me were standing with their children in strollers at the exit gate. While I was busily seeing that the last of the group were ushered in, the first of the group were already on their way out. Apparently, they had "been to the zoo." I suggested they go back in and look around some more. After I made my own way into the zoo, I arrived upon the scene of almost the entire two busloads of parents and children all gathered together under the shade of the trees on a grassy hill. Only the Spanish-speaking mothers (married to Canadian men) were off "doing the zoo" in the way I had anticipated all the parents would. They were observed pointing out the animals to their children, reading signs to them, giving them rides on the merry-go-round, and buying them ice cream. All the other parents and children were "doing the zoo" in some way foreign to me. When we invited this group to gather outside the elephant compound to observe the show that was about to be performed they did so rather reluctantly I presume, because they were quick to return to their shady knoll directly following Lucy the elephant displaying her painting skills. I thought for sure this trip had been a failure. However, the next day parents thanked me repeatedly for taking them to the zoo. They and their children had a wonderful time and could not wait to participate in the next field trip.

What was going on for these families as they participated in the zoo trip in a way that did not match with my expectations of how and why we take children to community attractions and events? What were the children's experiences of the zoo? What did they learn and how? If parents had been instructed to participate in the zoo field trip in a particular manner, i.e. to converse with their children about what they see the animals doing, how "successful" would this trip have been?

In my observations of the centre-based childcare services offered to parents enrolled in English as an additional language (EAL) classes at the settlement agency serving as the research site, parents are encouraged to spend time in the Children's Centre interacting with their children. Staff members do their best to help parents feel welcomed and comfortable in these situations. Still, parents may enter the room, but only to change their child's diaper, or to take the child out of the room to spend their break from class together, and of course during arrival or departure. For some reason, parents do not linger in the centre to play, sing, and tell stories to their children as the early childhood educators wish them to. On the other hand, when Sudanese mothers and children are given the opportunity to engage in swimming together at an indoor swimming pool, the songs, stories, rhymes, and play witnessed between parents and children are what staff would hope to see in the centre-based programming.

What is it about these two environments, the children's centre, and the swimming pool, that brings out such different results? What motivates early childhood educators to "insist" that parents become involved in a particular way in the centre-based programs their children attend? Why in some naturalistic environments such as the swimming pool do certain refugee parents interact with their children in ways similar to many Canadian parents, and in others, such as the zoo, they do not?

These experiences open my eyes and "interrupt" my defined ways of perceiving "good" early childhood practice. Typically, early childhood educators approach refugee children and their families as persons needing care and support. They are considered deficient. The job of the early childhood education team is to teach the refugee family now living in Canada all they should know so that they can begin to relate together in prescribed ways. There is a "right way" and a "wrong way," a developmentally appropriate and a developmentally inappropriate way, for adults and children to interact. Families are expected to adopt these developmentally appropriate ways. Little effort is made to understand the circumstances and life experiences of refugee families; efforts tend to be focused on one-sided change rather than mutual interchange.

The observed behaviours of refugee parents and their children discussed above indicate we could do with a better understanding of what it is refugee parents want for themselves and their children. Along with my colleagues at the settlement agency, we planned and undertook the zoo trip with refugee and immigrant families as part of a family literacy initiative. It was perceived as an opportunity for parents and children to engage in conversation about the animals they observed. This is not what transpired. Clearly, parents were not interested in pointing out to their children all the attractions available to them at the zoo; or they did not know this is what was "supposed" to be done. As an early childhood educator, is it my role to inform and teach refugee parents now living in Canada how to interact with their children? If I take the approach that newcomers are to be taught how to parent their children according to developmentally appropriate practice norms, do I not send the message that their indigenous way is wrong? At the same time, refugee parents want their children to be successful in Canadian educational experiences. How can early childhood educators support families in maintaining the parenting practices of their home culture while at the same time helping these families to ensure their children are ready to enter educational experiences outside their homes?

Furthermore, what part do the children play in this adjustment process? "Along for the ride," having little say in what is happening in their lives, young children are most times thought of as passive recipients of what life has to offer. However, preschool refugee children, though often underestimated, do influence how these families adjust to life in Canada. What are these influences? What are the relationship dynamics that develop between preschool refugee children and the adults in their lives as together they forge new ways of "being"? What roles do children play in establishing the "new" parenting practices, beliefs, values, and goals of the family? In what ways do children influence the strategies parents use to guide or mediate the children's learning in the new cultural context?

The Research Question

Refugee families arrive in Canada having a certain culturally determined set of parenting practices, beliefs, values, and goals for their children. Now transplanted to a different context with a different set of culturally determined parenting practices, beliefs, values, and goals for children, how do refugee families navigate their way through this changing field? To know and understand what are typical parenting norms in Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, etc., is beneficial; however, the research question I wish to address is, what effect does this crossover period have upon the way refugee parents and their preschool children relate and interact? What role do early childhood educators play and how does developmentally appropriate practice affect this transition? In particular, I wish to explore the ways preschool refugee children's learning is guided or mediated by their parents and by early childhood educators while in this transition phase.

Chapter 2 - Examining Early Childhood

In 1987, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) undertook to provide the early childhood community in North America with a standardized set of guidelines that would direct the field in the focus towards accreditation as well as provide a response to the increasing push to bring academic style learning into the preschool years (Bredekamp, 1987). The document quickly became the defining statement of early childhood practice in both the United States and Canada.

Criticism towards the lack of regard for the particularities of special needs and minority populations (Mallory & New, 1994; Spodek & Saracho, 1991), led to a revised edition being published in 1997 (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). This version continues to be the focus of much dialogue and debate (Cannella, 2002; Charlesworth, 1998a, 1998b; Edwards, 2003, 2005a, 2005b; Hatch et al., 2002; Hyun, 1998; Lubeck, 1998a, 1998b; Van Horn, 2005).

Since the inception of the developmentally appropriate practice document, a movement of resistance and rerepresentation, grounded in critical theory, has sought to resist the predominance of Eurocentric child development theory within the early childhood field, and to foster curriculum and pedagogy that represents the cultural diversity inherent in our world (Jipson & Johnson, 2001). The revised edition of developmentally appropriate practice claims to heed the social and cultural context from which children and families arise. However, along with other "reconceptualists," I contend that by continuing to adhere to a developmentalist viewpoint of child growth and learning, other ways of viewing children and childhood continue to be marginalized, both in theory and in practice.

While the critique of developmentally appropriate practice has been underway for some time, and various dimensions considered by others offer insight to this analysis, the distinct contribution of this research is the examination of these principles and practices in the context of refugee family resettlement.

Following is a representative sample of the literature, on the one hand seeking to defend, and on the other problematize and reconceptualize developmentally appropriate practice in the North American context. Hyson states in her role as discussant to a colloquium exploring the diverse attitudes towards developmentally appropriate practice, "Fifteen years after the publication of the first version of NAEYC's position, 'DAP' has taken on a life of its own, entering common professional vocabulary, being waved as a banner, or reviled as a political conspiracy" (Hatch, A., Bowman, B., Jor'dan, J. R., Morgan, C. L., Hart, C., Soto, L. D., Lubeck, S., & Hyson, M., 2002, p. 456).

Developmentally Appropriate Practice Considered

The Defenders

Criticism levelled against the original developmentally appropriate practice document published in 1987 centred on the fact that developmental theory, as espoused primarily by Jean Piaget, is the sole understanding upon which the document is based and that such an orientation lacks relevance to diverse populations (Mallory & New, 1994; Spodek & Saracho, 1991). By its proponents, the revised version of developmentally appropriate practice sets to rest these criticisms (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). In the preface to the revised edition is expressed the view that through extensive dialogue and consensus building, it is felt that "both/and" thinking rather than "either/or" thinking is put forth, and that for example, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and Vygotsky's theory of sociocultural-historical learning are reflected in the position statements and suggested practices alongside those of developmental theory.

Charlesworth (1998a) expresses the view that developmentally appropriate practice "is for everyone, whatever their socioeconomic status, culture, race, gender, age or special needs" and that the revised edition gives "equal attention to age, individual *and* cultural appropriateness" (emphasis in original, p. 274). Further, she points out, the document is intended as a "guide" to be used in a "child-centered" approach that considers each child "unique." Charlesworth suggests that curriculum is not dictated by developmentally appropriate practice, teachers are to determine what curriculum will best foster the development of each individual child based on the appropriate and inappropriate guidelines.

Bowman, as one of several writers in Hatch et al. (2002), furthers the idea that developmentally appropriate practice is not a "static curriculum." The difficulty arises when suggestions for appropriate and inappropriate practice are divorced from the developmental principle they are intended to reflect. "Practice responds to principles but there may be a number of practices that reflect the same principle depending on the needs of children, the resources of the program, the skills of the teacher" (p. 442). Of paramount importance is the teacher's own decision making ability. The early childhood educator is to be "skilled at planning, teaching, and assessing children if s/he is to select the most meaningful and intellectually challenging activities for different children" (p. 443). Bowman believes as a profession, greater emphasis should be placed on pre-service and in-service teacher education if developmentally appropriate practice is to be properly implemented.

Pursuing the theme of developmentally appropriate practice as a guideline, Jor'dan, in Hatch et al. (2002), asserts that issues arise when these guidelines are misinterpreted and misrepresented. The fault is not with the document, but rather in its implementation. The solution to this problem is twofold; more dialogue with culturally diverse communities to determine how developmentally appropriate practice can be applied in their context, and "professional preparation to support individuals in implementing developmentally appropriate practices" (p. 445).

As another in the series of defenders appearing in Hatch et al. (2002), Hart argues that having an agreed upon set of standards regarding normative development, such as those presented by the developmentally appropriate practice framework, allows teachers to "tune into the considerable variation that exists in children, which is tied to individual genetic, family, and sociocultural factors" (p. 447). In other words, having been presented with the normative standard, adjustments in teaching practices can move along the continuum accordingly. Hart goes on to site research results that indicate, "Children enrolled in more DAP classrooms exhibit less stress behavior, fewer behavioral problems, and are more motivated to learn" (p. 448).

As the final writer in Hatch et al. (2002) seeking to defend developmentally appropriate practice, Morgan furthers the theme that developmentally appropriate practice is a "continuum" with the flexibility to meet the requirements of diverse families. While acknowledging the primacy of developmental theory within the original document, Morgan feels the revised version addresses this issue by "including a more complex discussion of cultural relevance as a critical factor in teaching practices" (p. 446). She admits the document falls short however, in that Western values are still presented as the standardized starting point from which to evaluate and modify practice.

The Critics

The critique of developmentally appropriate practice is taken from many perspectives; critical theory, feminism, post-colonialism, post-structuralism, historicism, critical multiculturalism, and sociocultural-historical theory all have weighed in and have their proponents. While acknowledging the complexities and divergences that exist within and between these traditions, with respect to their relation to the developmentally appropriate practice debate, I believe, three axioms of postmodernism as presented by Hatch et al. (2002) serve to under gird these various schools of thought:

> (1) Avoid dividing the complex world into binary opposites (e.g. right/wrong; black/white; good/bad); (2) judge a policy (movement, theory, law, position statement) by what happens as a result of its implementation, not by its intent; and (3) be suspicious of grand narratives (theories, discourses) that purport to be based on the Truth with a capital T, understanding that multiple truths always exist and that Truth is always a social-political construction related to power. (p. 440)

What binds together those who problematize and question developmentally appropriate practice is a desire to upset the status quo. Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence

(1999), in bringing postmodern thought to early childhood education, believe the language used and the questions asked within the field "express a desire for a clean and orderly world, devoid of messiness and complexity" (p. 2). In reality, children and childhood are shifting and contested ideas that cannot be explained by any one theoretical orientation.

Those seeking to reconceptualize early childhood practice wish to bring the divergences and exceptions to centre stage. The "additive approach" which has other orientations grafted on while developmental theory still holds supremacy is insufficient. Ryan and Grieshaber (2005) speak of the hybridity that characterises contemporary life and put forward that early childhood teacher education offer opportunities to view situations from multiple perspectives. Furthermore, "The postmodern orientation assumes that all knowledge in its use exercises power" (p. 36). Developmental theory as holding the power in early childhood education must be challenged and other ways of understanding children and childhood brought to bear on the dialogue. Speaking with respect to education generally, Dei, James, James-Wilson, Karumanchery, and Zine (2000) propose a "multi-centred" focus.

> It is through a truly multi-centred framework that the validity and completeness of non-European cultures, histories and societies can be understood and valued as being equally as significant as those of the Anglo-European tradition. (p. 240)

Jipson (2001) offers that early childhood curriculum, based on Western traditions of thought reproduces "classed, raced, and gendered distortions in its representation of the world" (p. 5). These traditional representations are to be resisted and conceptions of children, childhood, and early childhood practice be reconceptualized and re-represented in ways that honour a multiplicity of voices. Johnson (2001) writes of feeling "silenced" in his attempts to speak about issues that force the boundaries of developmentally appropriate practice; "Normalcy and safety are the thematic issues traditionally adhered to throughout the field of early childhood education" (p. 306). He calls for an opening of the imagination so the early childhood landscape can be "redefined, unsilenced, and reconceptualized" (p. 306).

Cannella (2002) urges for the "deconstruction" of six key tenets of early childhood doctrine as espoused by developmentally appropriate practice. First, modernist/enlightenment conceptions of children and childhood represent children as reified specimens to be regulated and studied. The deconstruction of such ideas is necessary so children can be respected and heard in all of their complexities and ambiguities. Second, child development theory serves to perpetuate regimes of power, with those categorized as "normal" dictating how and by whom deficiencies in the other are to be addressed. The cultural, historical, political, and social context in which child development norms have been constructed ought to be laid bare. Third, the heavy emphasis placed on early life experiences as determinants of later life outcomes "locates societal problems either in the individual, the mother, or the family" (p. 158). Here again, the political, historical, and social relations of power that created this discourse require examination. Fourth, the "institutionalization" of early childhood has served to promote segregation by placing groups of people who meet certain developmental criteria in a position of superiority with respect to those who do not meet these criteria. It is incumbent on us to scrutinize the regimes of politics and power behind such moves. Fifth, developmentally appropriate practice has privileged child-centred, play-based instruction as the "universal human pedagogy that is appropriate for all human beings, the truth for everyone" (p. 117). This position denies other cultural values and beliefs about how young children live and learn in the context of their home and community. Sixth, the promotion of "professionalism," one of the hallmarks of the developmentally appropriate practice movement, serves to perpetuate patriarchal values of discipline and regulation.

Feminists within the early childhood field respond to patriarchy by pressing for a critical interrogation of "every theory and practice which determines the conditions of our environment" (Brady, 1995, p. 2). Classrooms need to become places where children and teachers' experiences are central, and a space is created where knowledge, skills, and identities can be formed based on inclusive principles. Furthermore, a language of critique and possibility, where teachers become engaged as intellectuals, is waiting to be opened up (p. 85). Goldstein (1997) considers feminism an opportunity to bring women and women's ways of knowing from the margins to the centre. "Feminists envision a future in which women's voices, and all marginalized voices, will be respected and heard" (p. 10).

Hauser and Jipson (1998) take a "storied" approach to exploring the intersections between "feminisms" and "early childhoods." Acknowledging the many dimensions from which issues can be explored within the feminist paradigm, the use of the plural is deliberate. The varied theories, histories, and identities, both private and public that exist among women in the early childhood field require telling. In so doing, as women, teachers, and parents we can begin to rethink how we teach and relate to young children.

Soto, as one of the critics of developmentally appropriate practice in Hatch et al. (2002), puts forth the shortcomings of relying on "scientific orientations of child development" that espouse a "persistent empirical and quantitative paradigm" (p. 450). The predominance of psychological and biological theories has left no room for alternative viewpoints. Writing after the "World Trade Centre tragedy," she supports a move towards critical constructivism in order to examine issues of power that stand in the way of equity and social justice. To continue with the developmentally appropriate practice paradigm is to perpetuate Cartesian dualistic thinking. What is essential in our pluralistic and globalized world is a liberating praxis. "The creation of knowledge in the field is not for elitist child development researchers only" (p. 451). The deconstruction and decentring of the scientific tradition, Soto (2000) believes, will open spaces of hope and possibility.

The developmentalist standpoint, based on positivist principles, is further questioned by Lubeck (Lubeck, 1998a, 1998b). That human behaviour can be objectively appraised through detached and unbiased observation is challenged, along with beliefs that universal generalizations can be drawn from particular experiences. The rating scales and checklists that inevitably accompany developmentally appropriate practice are methods to promote conformity, when what is necessary is time and opportunity to dialogue about situations in context. Lubeck wants a shift away from the scientific positivist paradigm towards seeing human beings as subjects in context, "We need to tailor teaching and learning to the needs of children in ways that make sense in the moment – not for all time" (1998a, p. 287).

In their review of research on the effects of developmentally appropriate practice on children's development, Van Horn, Karlin, Ramey, Aldrige, and Snyder (2005) conclude that though the practices are extensively used, empirical research as to their efficacy is very limited. They state, "We find no evidence of consistent effects of DAP for cognitive or academic outcomes" (p. 325). With respect to psychosocial outcomes, the results are more consistent, with the conclusion drawn that, "DAP is related to a variety of positive psychosocial outcomes ranging from reduced stress to increased creativity" (p. 326). They strongly caution however, that methodological errors in the data analysis, when accounted for, tend to negate any positive results reported.

Taking up the sociocultural-historical critique, Edwards (2003, 2005a, 2005b) presents three "pathways" in which Vygotsky's work merges with developmentally appropriate practice. The "assimilated positivist path" is that which is represented in the revised version of developmentally appropriate practice. In this approach, sociocultural-historical descriptions of development have been grafted on or assimilated into a "predominately positivist theoretical framework" (2003, p. 261). Here social interaction is understood as having an "influence" on development. The "social-constructivist path" as most clearly exemplified in the Reggio Emilia programs, perceives social interaction as the "mediator" of development (p. 262). Children's cognitive development though is still positioned within the Piagetian constructivist position. The "transformative path" as most clearly represented by the work of Rogoff (1984, 1990, 1995, 2003), positions sociocultural-historical theory as a "true alternative" to developmental theory. Considering three planes of influence, the intrapersonal, the interpersonal, and the societal, a shift is made from the "individual child perspective to a more inclusive perspective encompassing development for all children as it occurred for them according to *their* cultural experience" (emphasis in original, p. 258). Sociocultural-historical considerations, not developmental theory, become the basis upon which pedagogical decisions are made. Edwards acknowledges such an approach is in the fledgling stages, and it remains to be seen how sociocultural-historical theory will be translated into practice.

Learning Through Play Contextualized

The history of play in the Western context has been well documented (Bruner, Jolly & Sylva, 1976; Herron & Sutton-Smith, 1971; Lowenfeld, 1969), as has the role of play in the evolution of early childhood care and education (Bloch, 1987, 1990; Saracho, 1991). Furthermore, the study of "play" has become a well-established field of research. Today, all introductory child development and life span development textbooks discuss play, and provide an overview of "classical" and "modern" theories of play. Berk (2006), recently published in a Seventh Edition, stands as a representative sample. Within the study of early childhood care and education, courses on play theory and practice dominate, and there is a great deal of literature designed to accompany the discipline. The purpose here is to establish the concept of "learning through play" as the hallmark of developmentally appropriate practice.

Developmental theory has, and continues to be a major force in Western conceptions of play (Bergen, 1988; Cohen, 2006; Johnson, Christie & Yawkey, 1999;

Neumann, 1971). While most writings on play contain sections that bring the reader's attention to how play is influenced by gender, culture, and special needs, and that different provisions for play might be appropriate in some cases (Fromberg & Bergen, 2006; Frost, Wortham & Reifel, 2005; Hughes, 1999), attempts to understand play from contexts outside of developmental psychology are just beginning. The reconceptualization of play is slow to reach the level of the introductory child development or play study textbook.

The importance of play is sacrosanct amongst parenting "experts" as well (Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000), and a very romantic view of children's play persists, both within popular culture (Laumann, 2006), and amongst early childhood icons (Paley, 2004). Within this romantic inclination is the pervasive view that play can be all things to all people (Scarlet, Naudeau, Salonius-Pasternak & Ponte, 2005). Some authors include "new twists" on the learning through play paradigm, for example, "multiple intelligences" is coupled with developmentally appropriate practice (Hirsh, 2004), and play is presented as the central element in promoting "anti-bias attitudes" (Dau, 1999). Though couched in a variety of terms, the dominant view remains; the chief purpose of play is to promote the learning of preschool children (Singer, Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2006; Van Hoorn, Nourot, Scales & Alward, 2007), and this learning is to take place in prescribed ways.

Following in the wake of the publication of the NAEYC developmentally appropriate practice text came an abundance of print resources designed to support the implementation of the learning through play philosophy (Jones, 1992; McKee, 1986; Reynolds & Jones, 1997). The publication of such companion volumes continues (Gestwicki, 2007; Sluss, 2005). Furthermore, the development of play materials to accompany the learning through play philosophy has resulted in primary coloured plastic dominating North American early learning and care centres and community playgrounds, as well as many homes.

Play within the developmentally appropriate practice construction is considered an antidote to academics in the early years. Proponents claim that a child will be well prepared to enter formal schooling if given an opportunity to develop knowledge in a developmentally appropriate practice play context. I find it interesting that this strong voice against academics in early childhood actually sets the primary purpose of play as being for academic preparation. Whether by play or by structured learning, it seems the purpose of childhood is to get children ready for the academic setting (Miller & Devereux, 2004; Wood & Attfield, 2005). This is evident in the many programs commonly offered today; "Rhymes That Bind," Early Head Start," "Parent and Tot," "Stay and Play," and "Head Start," to name a few. Childhood is considered a time of getting ready, with each program being the program that gets children ready for the next program. All of this readiness taking place within the context of play.

Within the field of sociology there began a movement to rethink and reconceptualize Western views of children and childhood (James & Prout, 1997; Jenks, 1996; Prout, 2000). This dialogue has been taken up and continues within the early childhood care and education domain (Hultqvist & Dahlberg, 2001; Penn, 2005). Still, it seems that finding a recipe for the proper provision of early childhood care and education remains the focus. For example, Brooker (2005) and Edwards

(2003, 2005b), while providing valuable critiques of Piagetian dominated learning through play, both authors turn to the Reggio Emilia conception of early childhood practice as the model to follow instead. Hatch (2005), in providing a "balanced" framework for teaching in the "new kindergarten" still seems to be looking to find the template for the right way to do early childhood practice. McNaughton and Williams (2004) seem to think if we can just get our "techniques" right we will have it made. The study and analysis of play (Brown & Marchant, 2002) with the aim of producing "excellence, structure, and quality" (Moyles, 2005) prevails.

The cry for "revolution" which began with Cannella's work of deconstruction ten years ago still seems a long way off. It is particularly disheartening when very recently published material examining the differences between American and Chinese early childhood practice condemns the Chinese practices as the result of "teacher ignorance" (Pang & Richey, 2007).

The influence of developmentally appropriate practice and the learning through play philosophy is evident worldwide (Prochner, 2002; Cleghorn & Prochner, 2003). Many refugees and refugee support workers speak about refugee camps, though lacking in food, water, and sanitation, as oftentimes being equipped with a Western style daycare facility for preschool children.

Understanding play in cultural context is a growing field of study (Göncü, 1999; Reifel, 1999; Roopnarine, Johnson & Hooper, 1994; Roopnarine, 2002; Tobin, Wu & Davidson, 1989), and it is becoming evident that play requires study in time and context. Play as understood and lived in the developmentally appropriate practice conception is not universal. Children growing up in non-Eurocentric contexts experience daily life differently and thus experience play differently. Play takes various roles and conceptions depending on sociocultural-historical circumstances.

Gaskins (1999) describes a moment in the life of an 18-month-old Mayan child (pp. 31-32). The life of this child is intimately woven into the life of the whole family. As the mother and older children engage in purposeful activity in and around the family compound, the young child also engages in these same purposeful acts. The child requires no special aids or provisions (toys), and is not treated in anyway different from other family members, there seems to be no awareness nor need for child-centred practice. Neither the mother nor the older siblings stop what they are doing and place the child at the centre of their focus; she simply is part of the daily life of the family. The other startling observation is that this child does not speak during this scenario, and no one directly addresses her. It can be presumed however, that this child will acquire linguistic abilities in keeping with other children in her community.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that ideas dearly held within developmentally appropriate practice; learning through play, child-centred practice, and following the child's lead, are not a part of all cultures and do not have meaning to all people. One might take the standpoint that these alternative ways of being in the world with young children, though they apply in their indigenous context, have no place within the North American context. The reality is however, given the movement of people worldwide, practices are being transplanted; other practices are here. The question becomes, how are these alternative ways of living and being with young children incorporated into or juxtaposed against the developmentally appropriate practice way? How we live alongside newcomers to our communities requires rethinking in the context of an increasingly globalized world. The movement of people with other conceptions of play to places such as Edmonton offers an opportunity to observe and learn. The time has come for those of us in early childhood education and care to step outside the developmentally appropriate practice structure and be open to seeing and incorporating into our practice other ways of being in the world with young children.

Chapter 3 - The Nature of Human Development

Ontological Assumptions

This research rests on two suppositions; first, humans are by nature social beings, and second, all people are motivated to learn and change (Wenger, 1998). At times the motivation to learn and change is intrinsic and has positive associations, while at other times, learning and changing is forced and undertaken with resistance; none the less, learning and changing are central to human nature. Regarding our innately social nature, while there exists a wide range of styles of relating, from the farthest introversion to the farthest extroversion, most people have a capacity and desire to communicate and interact (Siegel, 1999).

Of significance to note, my ontological belief is that learning is the prime motivation for, and the ensuing result of, social interaction. In other words, learning is not an action, but rather a way of being-in-the-world. It is not so much that human beings set out to learn, but rather cannot help but learn because of the socially embedded nature of human life. This socially embedded learning takes place in an environment. In other words, we learn, change and grow within a cultural context.

Culture Defined

Culture rests at the heart of who we are. Göncü (1999) presents the conceptualization of "culture as a system of meanings," in which "each culture, when unpacked, presents itself as a unique network of variables, or meanings, that demand an understanding as a whole" (p. 11). Spindler (1987) speaks of the "transmission of culture."

Culture cannot be parceled out into neatly defined categories; food, language, celebrations, and dress that when catalogued result in an understanding of culture. It is not the actions or artefacts of a people or an individual that are their culture, but rather the meanings given to and derived from the subtle and miniscule ways of doing things that infuse the environment and social interactions of a community of people. This is not to preclude the grand celebrations and major events people experience, these too are infused with meanings, but to think that these alone define a culture is faulty.

As human beings, we are inextricably linked to the environments in which we dwell. Both the prior history and ongoing elements of those locations are infused with meaning. It is the meanings behind the practices, beliefs, and ways of being that distinguish one culture from another. Rogoff (2003) emphasizes the point that culture is a fluid and changing concept. As human beings develop and change, so do the practices of a culture, and so do the meanings behind the practices. In coming to understand one's own or another's culture, the meanings are what to puzzle over.

As an anthropologist, Hoffman (1996) unmasks the assumptions hidden behind standard approaches to culture studies. Multiculturalism education, as traditionally practiced, serves only to perpetuate Euro-centric conceptions of culture, self, and identity. She puts forward,

> The concept of culture has been simplified and reified to fit multiculturalist discourses that support visions of personal, ethnic, or national cultural identity that are fixed, essentialized, stereotyped, and normatized. … The underlying

> theme is that culture has some kind of existential autonomy; it is something that "does things" to people. (p. 549).

Rather than comprehending culture as a template stamped upon someone, culture as "ways of life" becomes the focus. Only through the vastly complex and infinitely ongoing life experiences of people can culture be approached as we assume a posture of "natural and genuine explorers who are able to transform, and be transformed by, their encounters" (p. 565).

Epistemological Assumptions

It is through social interactions with others that human beings come to learn and change. Learning furthermore, takes place not in the minds of individuals, but rather in the interactions between individuals (Capra, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Knowledge therefore is not something to be grasped, but rather is co-constructed through co-participation between beings (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999). Together knowledge and understanding is constituted. Finally, moments of learning and change happen in many and various ways. Learning is not always a structured event, nor does it take place only in times designated teaching events. Learning takes place through many various ways and means. It is in fact through "everyday interactions" that most learning and change takes place (Wenger, 1998).

Methodological Assumptions

Coming to know and understand the social nature of human learning requires a research posture that is open to seeing and hearing learning reflected in numerous ways (Smagorinsky, 1995). The issue is not to determine the cognitive processes involved in learning, or to identify "one best way" of fostering human change, but rather to specify the social relations involved when learning takes place (Rogoff, 2003; Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, the contextual nature of learning indicates that each situation is one of a kind (Tedlock, 2000). Full and layered descriptions of learning within one social context will be expected to differ from those that describe another social context. Finally, learning and change is not a one-sided endeavour. Research methodologies must reflect the mutually constituted nature of knowledge and growth that affects all parties involved (Smagorinsky, 1995).

Sociocultural-Historical Learning

The work of Vygotsky has led to the development of numerous theories, all of which regard human development as embedded in the social, cultural, and historical context in which people live. We become the persons we are, not in a vacuum, but rather in a social environment. The communities in which we live determine who we are and what we know.

Being new to a community, refugee parents are aware that there are different systems of knowledge and meaning, however they often are uncertain how to integrate their previous knowledge with what they presently perceive. In addition, they are not certain what meaning to derive from this knowledge. It is a parent's role to interpret and explain the meaning of the knowledge implicit in society. This however is a challenging task when refugee parents are uncertain themselves of what meaning to derive from the social action they encounter.

Wertsch (1991) uses the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1981, 1986) to develop his "sociocultural approach to mind." He writes; "The basic goal of a sociocultural approach to mind is to create an account of human mental processes that recognizes the essential relationship between these processes and their cultural, historical, and institutional settings" (p. 6). Through this approach, the vital element to be described is "action." Human beings create themselves and their sociocultural-historical world through their actions. Human action, Wertsch attests, takes the form of "mediation." Tools such as language are used as mediators in shaping human action. A key aspect of Phase 2 of this research is identifying the tools of guidance and mediation used by refugee families in shaping the actions of their preschool children.

Using Bakhtin's conception of "voice" Wertsch (1991) stresses the importance of language as a tool of mediation. He does however assert the multiplicity of voices; "I have chosen to speak of *voices* rather than voice because I believe that there are multiple ways of representing reality in approaching a problem" (emphasis in original, p. 14). A key aspect of this research is recording the multiplicity of voices used by adults in the guidance and mediation of refugee children's learning.

Vygotsky (1986) places language as central and key in children's acquisition of knowledge. Smagorinsky (1995), commenting on the work of Luria (one of Vygotsky's students), calls into question the primacy Vygotsky and his followers placed on "the development of speech-mediated scientific concepts as the ultimate form of cognitive maturity" (p. 205). Language use is culturally determined, and the use of language to mediate learning differs depending on the sociocultural-historical circumstances in which the pattern of language use is derived. In the case of refugee families living in a multicultural and multilingual context, what role does language play as a tool to guiding and mediating learning? When the use of language differs from what the observer expects, or when the interpretation of language use is decontextualized, errant assumptions can be made. How can early childhood educators come to better understand the role language plays in the way refugee families mediate their children's learning? For preschool refugee children enrolled in early childhood care and education settings, what forms of guidance and mediation can be used in centre-based programs that will support refugee families in their desire to have their children maintain their home values, culture(s), and language(s)?

Rogoff's (1984, 1990, 1995, 2003) contribution to the sociocultural-historical study of human development is particularly relevant to this research. Many years spent in first-hand observation of young children in their communities, as well as utilizing the observations of others, have led her to develop the statement that I consider foundational to my study, "Humans develop through their changing participation in the sociocultural activities of their communities, which also change" (2003, p. 368). The idea of change is noteworthy, especially in relation to transitions between cultures. Located in a new culture, immersed in a different language, what changes come forth in the childrearing practices of refugee families? What changes develop in the guided learning and mediation strategies utilized? What consequences arise because of these changes? In the course of human history, change is usually gradual and societies adapt without even being aware that this is happening. With refugee communities, this is not the case. Forced into making immediate changes in their way of being in the world, what effect does this have on refugee families?

Play as Leading Activity

Building on "activity theory" as developed by Leont'ev (1981), Göncü (1999) poses three questions to guide the sociocultural-historical study of children's engagement in the world: "(a) What are the activities that are available for children in their communities? (b) How do children engage in those activities? (c) What do children learn as a result of their engagement?" (p. 13). In the North American, developmentally appropriate practice arrangement, play is considered the leading activity of the early childhood period, and "learning through play" is firmly entrenched as the pinnacle tool used to promote child development in early learning and care settings.

While play may be universal, how children play is culturally determined. In coming to understand the role of play in refugee children's lives, it is necessary to look beyond human psychological processes and consider the economic, social, physical, and value systems that influence what activities are made available to children. Given the past and present influences of refugee families, what patterns of play have been established? What new patterns are being adopted? In this research, a strong methodological effort is made to "establish connections between community structure, adult values, and children's activities" (Göncü, 1999, p. 14).

Mediated Learning

In their approach to sociocultural-historical research, Bodrova and Leong (2007) study "tools of the mind" that are effective in promoting the learning of young children. "A tool is something that helps us solve problems, an instrument that facilitates performing an action" (Bodrova & Leong, 2007, p. 4). The goal of parents and educators is to help children attain the tools necessary for effective learning. Once acquired by children, the tools can be used in a self-directed manner. Children acquire the tools of the mind necessary to move from lower to higher levels of thinking when parents or more knowledgeable peers enter the child's zone of proximal development and mediate their learning using language, shared activities, and other mediators. As questioned earlier, what dynamics develop when parents are not "fluent" in the "tools of the mind" which dominate their new culture? What tools are passed on to their children, by whom, and in what manner?

Juliebo, (1985) building on the sociocultural-historical work of Feuerstein, Rand, Hoffman, and Miller (1980), outlines the characteristics of mediated learning as: (a) sharing – the mediator and child focus on something of mutual interest; (b) intentionality and reciprocity – the mediator shows intent, the child responds; (c) transcendence – the intent of the mediator is to bring the child into more complex learning; (d) meaning –mediating activities are meaningful and appropriate to the child; (e) regulation – the pace and flow of the activity is monitored to ensure success of the learner; and (f) competence – the mediator displays competence in the activity. Phase 2 of this study analyzes the use of these strategies in the context of adults interacting with three Sudanese preschool children.

Situated Learning

To be "situated" is to be "placed" or "located" within a certain context or circumstance (OED, 1989). Lave and Wenger (1991) in utilizing the term, "situated learning" consider learning "an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice" (p. 31). In other words, learning is embedded in the social context and circumstances from which it arises. Rooted in sociocultural-historical theory, (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1981, 1985) Lave and Wenger suggest learning is not merely about the accumulation of skills or information, but rather the formation and transformation of "being." It is through situated learning that humans become full, complex participants in the world. In fact, "agent, activity, and the world mutually constitute each other" (p. 33). That is to say, while people arise out of the places and circumstances in which they dwell, so too places and circumstances arise in relation to the ones who dwell there in. The world in each moment is what it is because of the interplay of factors that meet together in that moment. Furthermore, learning is not simply an offshoot that results through this interplay, but rather learning is the central purpose or focus. Given the shifting nature of the resettlement process, situatedness is tenuous. How is this reflected in the way the learning of preschool refugee children is guided and mediated?

Legitimate Peripheral Participation

In describing legitimate peripheral participation as the method by which learning takes place, Lave and Wenger (1991) hold that by simply being part of a community, one's membership is legitimated; there are no "illegitimate" members. Every aspect of the community, every member of the community contributes to the "landscape – shapes, degrees, textures – of community membership" (p. 35).

Regarding peripherality, there are two considerations. First, "insiders" (more knowledgeable members of a community) do occupy a more central role in a community by passing on the knowledge and expectations of membership to "newcomers" (peripheral members). At the same time however, a community has no defined centre. All members contribute to making the community what it is. All are participants irrespective of their role or location in the community.

Concerning participation, not only is the community constituted in the way it is because of its present membership, but also because of its cultural and historical background. The richness of a community results from "its interconnections: in historical terms, through time and across cultures" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 39). In this regard, all members, past, present, and future are involved as participants in the community. In regards to the resettlement process, the question becomes, who are the insiders and who are the outsiders within a particular community? Who has access to information necessary to becoming full participants in the present context?

Knowledge and learning cannot be decontextualized. We learn what we learn, in the way that we learn it, in the context of the "communities of practice" in which we live. Lave and Wenger (1991) propose a shift "from the individual as learner to learning as participation in the social world, and from the concept of cognitive process to the more-encompassing view of social practice" (p. 43).

Communities of Practice

What is meant by practice? In social practice theory, as explained by Lave and Wenger (1991), practices are the everyday activities of communities that serve in the "production, transformation, and change in the identities of persons" (p. 47). It is through legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice that one's identity and way of being in the world is derived. This is more than socialization, assimilation, or the absorption of social norms and context specific information. To view human development and learning from a community of practice framework entails viewing the whole person, not just the mind as actively participating in the world. The whole being and the whole community co-participate in bringing forth the world as it is constituted in any given moment. As well, communities and individuals are continuously in a process of change. As one factor alters, this affects all aspects and all members of a community. Wenger (1998) states, "Practice is not an object but rather an emergent structure that persists by being both perturbable and resilient" (p. 93). Finally, individuals are members in many and various overlapping communities of practice. I am at one time mother, teacher, student, friend, employee, always fully a member in each community while at the same time a different person in each of these communities. Through my legitimate peripheral participation in each, I learn and change in response to the sociocultural-historical context of each.

Wenger (1998) emphasizes the central focal point of the community of practice model, learning, by outlining four key aspects (p. 5). It is through participation in communities of practice that individuals derive *meaning* for their lives, gain knowledge and skills (*practice*), feel a sense of belonging (*community*), and become the people they are (*identity*), Each community of practice develops its own set of "practices, routines, artefacts, symbols, conventions, stories, and histories" (p. 6) that serve to establish the meaning, practice, community, and identity that are passed on to members.

Meaning is "negotiated" by way of the "dual" interplay between "participation" and "reification." Participation Wenger (1998) defines as "the social experience of living in the world" (p. 55). Reification is defined as the "thingness" of our participation (p. 58). In other words, meaning is derived simultaneously through our participation and the concrete forms of our participation. To help differentiate between "duality" and "dichotomy," Wenger uses the analogy of a mountain and a river. In a dichotomous existence, the mountain and the river would stand as distinct identities. As dualities however, "they shape each other, but they have their own shape" (p. 71). Meaning derived in communities of practice is brought forth through the duality of participation and reification.

The formation of "community," Wenger (1998) claims comes about through people's "mutual engagement" in a "joint enterprise" by means of a "shared repertoire" of actions (p. 73). This can be for a short or long term commitment, but the key determining factor that sets a community of practice apart is being together enough to develop a shared history. Through remembering and forgetting, through continuities and discontinuities, this history is built. Furthermore, the fluidity of group membership contributes to the building of community practice. Through "generational discontinuity" (the coming and going of members), the shared history is at the same time passed on and infused with new learning.

"Boundaries" or articulations between communities of practice are dualistic in nature (Wenger, 1998). Boundaries serve to contain communities, while also serving to allow communities of practice to infuse, interconnect, and overlap. The overlap can be facilitated through "boundary objects;" the reified forms of practice, or through "brokers;" the people who mingle between and amongst the various communities of practice that connect. It is often in this "nexus of perspectives," where community objects and brokers meet, that meaning, learning, and histories constellate, but only if there is shared meaning that leads to a shared competence between the two communities. The locality, proximity, and distance of communities influence this process of sharing meaning and developing new competences. Communities that are too close and too alike may have little to learn from one another, while communities too diverse might not perceive an opportunity for mutual engagement.

A further aspect of peripherality is introduced when boundaries and connections between communities of practice are considered. No single person can fully represent a community of practice; no one person is the community and each person will experience the community in their own way. Furthermore, outside the community of practice, isolated individuals cannot function as they would when inside. It is necessary to have both participation and reification in complimentarity in order to facilitate continuity in the practice of a community. This seems a particularly salient point with respect to refugee families. Due to the forced and sudden nature of departure from their homeland, they have brought with them few if any participating members or artefacts of their former communities of practice to help bridge the gap between past and present.

"Identity" is an integral part of the model of social learning developed by Wenger (1998). To focus on identity is not to move away from the social to focus solely on the individual, just as to focus on community does not mean ignoring the individual. The duality of the individual and the community together constitute identity through individuals negotiating the meanings of their experiences as community members. It is the personal and the social together; "it is the social, the cultural, the historical with a human face" (p. 145).

Self-image is who we are in words, what we say about ourselves. Identity is who we become in the inter-play between the duality of participation and reification. "As we encounter our effects on the world and develop our relations with others, these layers build upon each other to produce our identity as a very complex interweaving of participative experience and reification projections" (Wenger, 1998, p. 151). Identity is a process of negotiated "becoming" in the learning context of communities of practice.

The negotiation of identity takes place within a certain "trajectory," by which is meant not a linear pathway, but rather a "field of influence" (Wenger, 1998, p. 154). This influence is dual in nature; individual identity is set in motion along certain pathways, the pathways in turn are influenced by the development of individuals' identities. This trajectory has "coherence through time that connects the past, the present, and the future" (p. 154).

Because individuals are members of many communities, it is in the overlap, or the "nexus of multimembership" within one's "trajectory" that identity is "reconciled" (Wenger, 1998). The differing levels of participation and competency that an individual experiences within communities become reconciled into a coherent whole. This process of reconciliation can demand much effort, but is essential in the development of identity. Reconciliation is not only an individualistic endeavour. As personal identity is formed in the nexus or borders between communities, so are the natures of the communities shaped and formed in this way. "Through the creation of the person, it [identity] is constantly creating bridges – or at least potential bridges – across the landscape of practice" (p. 161). The landscape of practice can be far-reaching (global) or very limited (local). Communities and individuals within communities can be concerned with their own specific enterprise while at the same time engaged in determining the global implications or connections these enterprises hold.

It is not only through participation in communities of practice that identity is formed, but also through "non-participation" (Wenger, 1998). As well, the results of either can be facilitating or challenging. For example, "children of immigrants can experience this coexistence of participation and non-participation intensely when they are torn between the conflicting values of their family practices and their new communities at school and on the street" (p. 168).

The process of becoming, and the formation of identity can be described as having three spheres of influence; the work of "engagement," the work of "imagination," and the work of "alignment" (Wenger, 1998). Through engagement, a community of practice comes to life; through imagination, members step back and envision what their membership might look like and what meanings it will acquire; through alignment, perspectives are negotiated and energy is invested, directed, and focused in a coordinated way.

Refugee families arrive in Canada with already established identities. Yet, their collective and individual identities are abruptly forced into foreign communities of practice. How do they undertake the work of engagement, imagination, and alignment to the new communities of practice they find themselves in? How do they guide or mediate their preschool children's experiences of engaging, imagining, and aligning to the new communities of practice?

A key factor that influences the ability of people to realign and change their trajectory is the history they bring to the enterprise. The influences of the past have tremendous bearing on the present circumstances of refugee families. These families arrive in Canada with a particular history that shapes the way they approach their present situation. Phase 1 of this study describes the past and present circumstances of refugee families from seven ethnocultural communities with a look towards how these experiences affect resettlement. The data gathered in the first phase provides the background information necessary to contextualize the mediation of preschool refugee children's learning in Phase 2.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

Phase 1: Mapping Refugee Life Experiences

Purpose and Rationale for the Study

Phase 1 of this research identifies the settlement issues encountered by refugee families with preschool children living in Edmonton. These families meet a multitude of factors that impinge upon their ability to integrate into local society. As well, they often arrive with strengths and parenting strategies that go unnoticed and unsupported. Educators engaged with refugees witness the struggles of these families as they try to parent within two, often-conflicting cultural frameworks.

There is a pressing need to collect and analyze the "life experiences" of refugees in order to identify factors that influence their ability to integrate into the Edmonton community and determine how such factors enhance or impede their ability to parent preschool children in their new homeland. Such investigations will lead to greater understanding, awareness, compassion, and meaningful assistance for these parents and children.

Ethical Considerations

Only adult participants were involved in Phase 1 of this research, and their informed consent was obtained through facilitation provided by "cultural brokers." Cultural brokers are persons from within ethnocultural communities who serve as links or liaisons between their community members and those from outside their cultural group. Cultural brokers, who are bicultural and multilingual, were essential in offering the linguistic and emotional support necessary for participants to understand the nature of the research and to feel comfortable partaking in it. Cultural brokers were also invaluable to me. They brought tremendous insight to the research because of their position as sharing the same life experiences as the participants but having more time and experience living in Edmonton.

"Settlement professionals" also played a role in this research. By the term settlement professionals I refer to those employed by various agencies within the Edmonton community who support refugee families during resettlement. These include social workers, educators, psychologists, employment counsellors, community development workers, and others. Bringing their collective knowledge to this research adds depth that would not otherwise be possible. In all instances, persons involved in data collection and analysis provided sworn confidentiality.

Research Approach

Using qualitative research methods, information for Phase 1 of this research was gathered between November 2003 and June 2004. The results "map" the lived experiences of refugee families with preschool children during the resettlement period. The term "mapping" is commonly used in the context of ethnographic research. Though not strictly "ethnographic," this research is designed to describe, analyze, and interpret a "culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time" (Creswell, 2005, p. 436). While recognizing that refugees are in no way a homogeneous group, the research results do serve to illustrate the commonalities of this "cultural-sharing group," that is, refugee families with preschool children in transition to life in Canada.

Collaboration with community members is crucial to obtaining rich qualitative data. With the help of "gatekeepers" or "insiders," the qualitative researcher seeks to record the patterns of a culture-sharing group using "detailed and thick" descriptions (Creswell, 2005; Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001), descriptions that include "everything that is needed for the reader to understand what is happening" (Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, p. 195). Using tools of research common to ethnography; observations, interviews, and focus groups, Phase 1 of this research begins to map a set of factors that influence parenting and early childhood development in refugee families and was conducted as follows.

Review of Relevant Research

The critical analysis of the existing research in the areas of integration and resettlement provides the theoretical foundation for understanding the experiences of refugee families, as well as the influence of the larger society, and the support services, on their integration into the Edmonton community. Careful consideration and analysis of present research and practice helped delineate the focus of Phase 1 of this dissertation project. In examining the research surrounding the nature of resettlement, it is apparent that preschool children and the impact resettlement has upon them, and in turn what impact they have on the resettlement process for the rest of their family, is an area requiring study.

Fieldwork

Qualitative research within the human sciences uses various forms of fieldwork to document the real life experiences of people. Building on knowledge gained through the comprehensive review of published research and practice, fieldwork in Phase 1 consisted of focus groups, and interviews with refugee parents of preschool children, with the aim of recording their lived experiences as they adapt to life in Canada. Observations of refugee families and their children made while engaged in activities in naturalistic settings serve to illumine the data gathered in focus groups and interviews. Using this approach, I sought to "access the stories or narratives through which people describe their worlds" (Silverman, 2005, p. 168). The purpose was less concerned with "finding something" than it was with "describing the terrain."

In undertaking qualitative research, there are various ways to validate the research findings. Within Phase 1 of this research study, triangulation between the review of relevant research, the life experience data gathered from refugee families, and discussions with cultural brokers and other settlement professionals, provided validation.

Cultural brokers who have an already well established, trusting relationship with the families were involved in the focus groups and interviews. Having cultural brokers present during fieldwork served as a bridge between the research participants and myself, and helped bring security and comfort to those involved. As well, cultural brokers were able to provide translation of participant comments during fieldwork so I was able to keep abreast of the conversations. All focus groups and interviews were audio taped and later translated and transcribed.

Focus Groups

Seven focus groups were held; one for each of the ethnocultural communities included in the research. Afghan, African French speaking (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and Djibouti), Cambodian, Eritrean, Kurdish, Somali, and Sudanese families were represented in the focus groups. These communities were chosen in consultation with settlement professionals and were considered the central refugee groups in Edmonton at the time of the research. In total 63 parents were involved, with these parents collectively representing 89 preschool children and 141 children over six years of age. The number of participants in each focus group ranged from five to twelve persons. The purpose of the focus groups was two fold:

1. To begin gathering information from refugee families regarding factors that affect their ability to effectively integrate into Edmonton society, especially as this relates to the parenting of their preschool children, and
2. Find within the focus groups parents willing to enter into more in-depth personal interviews.

Cultural brokers who have already established relationships with the communities acted as group facilitators and interpreters.

Individual Interviews

Following the focus groups, conversational interviews were conducted with seven individuals; each person representing a different ethnocultural community involved in the research. During the interviews, detail about the experiences of specific families was gleaned. A cultural broker already known to the family was present during the interview to offer linguistic and other support to family members.

Analysis of Research Findings

In keeping with the common understanding that the analysis of qualitative research is an inductive process, I did not approach the focus group and interview transcripts with a predetermined method for coding the data (Goodwin, 1996; Merriam, 2002; Silverman, 2005). While knowing it was crucial to "winnow" the data to a manageable level (Creswell, 1998), I was also committed to allowing the voices of the participants to be heard. This meant at times, in order to keep the context and the narrative flowing, large amounts of text are reported in the research results (Bryman, 2004).

As the work of transcription progressed it became evident that the data could be grouped into four broad categories. In sharing their life experiences participants spoke of their life "before crisis," which for the most part had been a comfortable life. They also spoke about the upheaval of their lives during the "time of crisis," the time of being uprooted from their homes and forced into refugee status. Now living in Canada they shared what life is like for them in "the present." Finally, they shared their thoughts about "the future."

Following this broad coding into four categories, my focus became the material speaking of the present. While knowing that the present circumstances cannot be divorced from the past, what I sought to know was the settlement issues encountered in the present location. To help make certain the research findings were relevant to the community served, a "collective" approach was used in the analysis of the data. This occurred when on three occasions data transcribed and coded into the categories, "Life in the Home Country, Life During Crisis, Life in Canada, and The Future" was brought to working groups consisting of fellow researchers, cultural brokers, settlement professionals, and myself. In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, any identifying characteristics of individuals and families involved was omitted from the data transcriptions. In focusing on the material broadly coded, "Life in Canada," eight key settlement issues became evident as common across all ethnocultural refugee groups. These settlement issues are reported in chapter five.

Research Significance

This research provides data that will have far reaching implications within and beyond the Edmonton location. The results, particularly the emerging themes or factors that influence resettlement, contribute towards building a beginning knowledge and increasing understanding of the circumstances and experiences of refugee families in parenting and promoting early childhood learning within the context of a new culture. Furthermore, the results also point to areas for further research that will deepen the initial knowledge and understanding of the refugee experience and lead to improved interventions and support to culturally diverse and marginalized populations.

Phase 2: Mediating Refugee Children's Learning

Background to the Study

Phase 1 of this research informs the field of early childhood education about the overall challenges refugee families encounter. Phase 2 provides examples of how the learning of preschool refugee children from Sudan is guided and mediated by both their parents and early childhood educators in the midst of these resettlement challenges.

Sudanese refugees were chosen for participation in Phase 2 based on their involvement in the settlement agency serving as the research site. At the time of the research, Sudanese children comprised the largest ethnocultural group enrolled in early childhood programming at the settlement agency. My daily involvement with

Sudanese families, coupled with data gathered during Phase 1, pointed towards further research with this group as having the potential for rich insights.

It is noted that refugees from South Sudan are amongst the refugee population entering Canada after "protracted stays" in refugee camps. According to the UNHCR, it is estimated that in 2005 there were over one million Sudanese "persons of concern," meaning refugees, asylum seekers, returned refugees, and internally displaced persons (UNHCR, 2006b). While the Sudanese experience is not every refugee's experience and even among the Sudanese, there are diverse pre-migration histories, still, the Sudanese do serve as a representative sample of the too often typical refugee experience. Sudanese women involved in Phase 1 make these comments about the situation "back home."

> *Because of the civil war in Sudan, that is why we came here. Because we are from the south of Sudan we came to the north but still there was no peace. Some people were taken to prison and many people were killed, so we had to escape otherwise we would be killed. We went to Egypt, applied for resettlement, and were sent to Canada.*
>
> *I think before the war Sudan was OK, but since the war, everything has changed. Some people graduated from University and they have a good education but when they go to look for a job, they cannot get a job.*
>
> *It is getting worse. People in the towns have had their homes broken into, they have been taken to the desert without water or anything, and the children and older people are going to die there because of no water, food, or anything. The situation in Sudan is not good because everything is difficult.*

Purpose and Rationale for the Study

Phase 2, undertaken in the spring of 2006, involves three Sudanese mothers, their preschool age sons, and three early childhood educators who at the time were staff members of the early learning and care centre the children attended at a settlement agency in Edmonton. Taken together the families are representative of the various stages of the integration process. One family had been in Edmonton for only a few months at the time of the research, another for about half of the child's life and the third has lived in Edmonton since their son was a newborn. Each of the mother/child dyads has experienced differing levels of support and intervention through the settlement agency and its early learning and care centre. All of the child participants were due to begin Kindergarten a few months following the research.

I wish to note, this research does not seek to reify the refugee experience. I do not want to paint all refugee families with preschool children as the same, offering the same experiences to all their children. Rather I hope to demonstrate that there are many ways that families guide and mediate their children's learning. The aim is to open up early childhood practice to the possibility of incorporating a greater repertoire of strategies than that provided by the developmentally appropriate practice, learning through play model (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). While this may sound like my own bias and a predetermining factor that will influence the way I report this research, the casual observations made and accounted here already, such as the Kurdish New Year celebration and the field trip to the zoo, do indicate that refugee parents have distinct ways of guiding and mediating their children's learning.

Based on the findings from Phase 1, the second phase is built on the assumption that parents in all cultures want their children to learn. The question is, what methods of promoting learning do refugee families living outside of their familiar communities of practice but driven to participate in new ones use? When Sudanese refugee mothers are given the opportunity to make use of typical developmentally appropriate practice early childhood artefacts such as wooden building blocks with their children, perhaps for the first time, how are they utilized? At the same time, how are early childhood educators using these same artefacts with preschool refugee children from Sudan? What differences are noted and of what significance are these various mediation strategies to the children? Using the terminology of Bodrova and Leong (2007), how are the "tools of the mind" that refugee families want their children to acquire mediated in a context that is outside of their familiar communities of practice? How do these mediation strategies change as they move from the periphery to the centre of new communities of practice?

Accompanying questions include the following: why are certain tools and methods selected rather than some others; what motivates their use? What values and beliefs about children's place in the world lead to a desire to mediate their learning using the tools and practices selected? How does the reality of refugee families living in an unfamiliar context affect their ability to guide and mediate their children's learning in the host country? In this new context, how do they decide what "tools of the mind" to offer their children? How do refugee parents find the balance between providing their children with the knowledge they perceive to be necessary to succeed in Canadian society while at the same time maintaining the values and beliefs of their home culture? What role do early childhood educators play in seeking this balance? What role do the children themselves play in this process?

Materials Used in the Study

The early childhood artefacts used in this research, wooden building blocks, consist of 100 pieces in various shapes – rectangles, pillars, cylinders, triangles, cubes, arches, half circles, and contain coloured as well as neutral blocks. In the early childhood field, such blocks are typically classified as "manipulatives" to be used in small motor skill development as well as concept formation, and are materials Canadian born children and their parents in general have ready access to both in their homes and in early learning and care centres. Not only are Canadian born children of this generation usually familiar with these types of blocks, many of their parents too will have grown up using them. This familiarity with the materials provides such parents with the background to be able to guide and mediate their children in the use of the materials in a particular way. This is not the case for Sudanese mothers. Though their children might have had access to these types of materials in a United Nations sponsored refugee camp before coming to Canada, and most certainly now have access to them in the early learning and care centres they attend, the mothers have had little to no direct experience with these materials either as children or as adults.

Research Approach

The research conducted in Phase 1 provides a map of the overall issues refugee families come up against during resettlement. Phase 2 is designed to focus on a particular aspect of their settlement in Canada, and seeks not simply to describe, but also comment on what happens when Sudanese mothers and children encounter developmentally appropriate early childhood practice. In this regard, principles of "critical ethnography" as described by Creswell (2005), "a study of the shared patterns of a marginalized group with the aim of advocacy" (p. 438), serve to inform the approach I bring to Phase 2.

Being a refugee constitutes a life on the margins. Being a refugee preschool child, I contend results in even greater marginalization. A critical approach serves to bring the voice of the margins into the centre (Tedlock, 2000). Denzin (1997) in reflecting Marx writes, "we are in the business of not just interpreting but of changing the world" (p. 287). While conventional qualitative research is concerned with describing the way things are, critical research is concerned with the way things could be (Thomas, 1993).

While this research "describes" the forms of mediation used in the lives of preschool refugee children, i.e. "the way things are," the motivation for undertaking this research is to "influence" preschool practice, i.e. "the way things could be." The aim, therefore, is emancipatory.

> *Emancipation* refers to the process of separation from constraining modes of thinking or acting that limit perception of and action toward realizing alternative possibilities. *Repression* is the condition in which thought and action are constrained in ways that banish recognition of these alternatives. (emphasis in original, Thomas, 1993, p. 4)

The field of early education and care has for too long been "repressed" by the predominance of Eurocentric theories of child development. Seeing early childhood practice only through the lens of Piagetian and Eriksonian influenced developmentally appropriate practice has set alternative modes of thinking and acting on the sidelines. It is time for the voices of the margins to be heard. Using a critical approach, this research will "emancipate" other forms of mediating preschool children's learning and open them to investigation and dialogue.

Data Gathering Methods

Three Sudanese refugee mothers and their preschool sons, and three early childhood educators involved with these families participated in Phase 2 of the research. Interviews with adult participants and observations of adults and children using early childhood building blocks, serve as the research data.

First, all adult research participants were involved in one-on-one conversational interviews with the researcher. At this time, background information pertinent to the study was gathered. Participants were asked about their history before coming to Canada, their values and beliefs about parenting and early childhood learning, and their hopes for young children. Second, each pairing of mother and child was observed and video taped during a non-structured opportunity to use a set of wooden building blocks. Each early childhood educator was in turn paired with each child and observed and video taped while sharing in the use of the same set of wooden blocks. Third, post-interviews allowed an opportunity for participants to view the video data pertinent to them. At this time, adult participants offered insights and information that served to support the data analysis.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) liken the design, implementation, and analysis of qualitative research to dance choreography. "Just as dance mirrors and adapts to life, qualitative design is adapted, changed, and redesigned as the study proceeds, due to the social realities of doing research among and with the living" (p. 73). My initial intent in designing Phase 2 of this study was to observe refugee children, their parents, and early childhood educators interacting in the "naturalistic setting" of the early learning and care centre at the settlement agency chosen as the research site.

Photography and field notes were to be used in the data collection. As I began my observations in the children's centre, it quickly became apparent that the "social realities" of that setting were not conducive to providing the context I was looking for. The busyness of the early learning and care centre did not allow for focused attention being given to the adults and children selected for the study.

The decision was made to design a setting and an activity where the observation of one-on-one interaction between an adult and child was possible. The defined space where the observations occurred was an area commonly frequented by the participants, and was in a location families were familiar with and felt comfortable being in. All sessions were videotaped.

While acknowledging that a manufactured setting and activity are going to yield different results than might occur in the naturally arising day-to-day encounters, the decision was made to use this opportunity to develop a technique and the skills necessary to be able, at a later date, engage in similar studies within various naturalistic settings. Furthermore, it is known that refugee families entering the context of early care and education are formally and informally assessed in their use of early childhood materials. This study is designed to gather data that will avert the tendency to test, evaluate, and judge refugee children and parents by coming to understand the interrelationship among the tools of mediation, their sociocultural-historical use, their use in the research environment, and the understandings learners and researchers bring to the task (Smagorinsky, 1995). In understanding the factors that "make up the interrelated social environment of learning" (p. 200), it is hoped that all families, not only refugee families, will benefit.

Ethical Considerations

In order to secure informed consent, cultural brokers fluent in the language and culture of the research participants explained the research goals and procedures and were present during pre and post interviews with the Sudanese mothers. Parents provided informed consent on behalf of their children.

Taking research participants away from the naturally occurring rhythm of their experiences at the settlement agency during the conduct of this research may be questioned. Care and attention was given to recreating a setting that mirrored what would naturally occur in the early learning and care centre the children were attending and that the mothers and early childhood educators shared knowledge of. Furnishings and materials were taken from that setting and placed within a space conducive to observing and video recording one-on-one interactions.

I am aware that participants may have felt they were, at minimum, being "tested," or at worst, "haunted" (Gordon, 1997) by repressive social systems. However mediated learning, one of the key aspects this research is designed to observe, by its nature requires that focused attention be given to paired individuals. The intent was not to isolate, control, or test research participants, but rather to facilitate an opportunity to observe mediated learning in a way that required the least amount of time and effort on the part of all parties involved. Due care and attention was given to preparing participants for involvement, and all observations were made in an expedient manner. Each observation lasted no longer than 15 minutes. Furthermore, I was no stranger to the research participants. In my ongoing role at the settlement agency, I had frequent contact with all persons involved.

In my future and ongoing efforts to end the "tyranny" of developmentally appropriate practice, I will continue to hold central Gordon's (1997) image of "ghosts" that linger beneath the surface. In trying to rid early childhood practice of the ghosts of developmentalist influences, it is imperative to be sensitive to the repressive nature research efforts can have upon marginalized populations.

Analysis of the Research Findings

Acknowledging that "collaborative research" and "building reciprocity" in research has become increasingly popular in qualitative research, due to the language barrier that exists between the research participants and I, taking such an approach was difficult. Cultural brokers and other settlement professionals were involved in the data analysis as a way of substantiating the analysis offered by the researcher. I approached the viewing of data from a critical perspective as I sought to reconceptualize early childhood practice in the context of refugee resettlement. Therefore, my analysis of the data was grounded in the critique of developmentally appropriate practice reviewed in chapter two.

While accompanied by a cultural broker, parents viewed only the videotape of them and their son. At this time, I was able to ask clarifying questions and gain greater understanding about particular aspects of each scenario. The three early childhood educators together viewed the video data in its entirety. Viewing the data in the company of a social worker and clinical psychologist who offer settlement support to the research families, served to broaden my understanding of the sociocultural-historical context from which each of the families arose. It is interesting to note that though in the various opportunities to view the collective data with others

I attempted to leave the task open ended, in all instances, the focus became identifying the differences evident between the way the mothers and the early childhood educators approached the task, as well as the variations among the three boys in their use of the materials. All persons having access to the research data signed an oath of confidentiality.

The use of "talk, bodily conduct and the material resources at hand," are essential to be noted in this research (Heath, 2004, p. 266). The video recording of adult/child interactions "in situ" provides the opportunity to reflect repeatedly upon the verbal, and non-verbal interactions as well as the use of materials by the research participants.

Acknowledging that in the transcription of video data, analysis is already taking place in the selection of what and how to transcribe (Silverman, 2005), I attempt to provide as much detail as possible in both the verbal and non-verbal interactions taking place. I also seek to remain true to the first impressions received at the time the data was gathered. Just as there is danger in losing the context of the spoken word with the transcription of audio data there is danger in loosing the essence of a video taped event (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). It is my hope that the transcriptions and their analysis give some air of the felt sense of what was happening at the time of the live recording. It is significant to note that others who have viewed the recorded data corroborate the felt impressions I received.

While the data gathered and analyzed for Phase 2 consists of a collection of video-recorded events, the influences of the Phase 1 research process, coupled with immersion in settlement work for a twelve-month period bring an untold amount of data in the form of influence and perception. This "staying in a setting over time" has afforded me the opportunity to "crystallize" my awareness and understanding of refugee families and their situation during resettlement (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 73). Together with insights gained from the actual observations, is a storehouse of experiences, questions, and wonderings that have built up in me over the course of time spent with refugee families in the context of their lives in Edmonton.

Smagorinsky (1995) suggests data are never found or viewed as pure, self-contained, or uncontaminated, as arising in a "petri dish" vacuum. It is in the interrelationship between researcher, participants, and context that data emerge. "Our effort should not be to avoid participation in the construction of data, but to recognize and account for the ways in which we inevitably contribute to the shape our data take" (p. 208). This opportunity to share in the lives of refugee families has been much more than a research endeavour, I have been greatly touched by their lives and am very grateful for this opportunity.

Research Significance

Sociocultural-historical research increases understanding about the cultural group being studied; it can also increase understanding about the researcher's own culture. Rogoff (2003) uses the term "middleclass European American" to refer to the culture of the US. The term modified to read, "middleclass European North American," allows Canada to be included in this helpful terminology. By researching the guided learning and mediation strategies utilized with Sudanese refugee preschool children, greater insight is brought to the practices of Canadian early childhood educators. In reflecting on the work of LeVine (1966), Rogoff points out, "Engaging with people whose practices differ from those of one's own community can make one aware of aspects of human functioning that are not noticeable until they are missing or differently arranged" (p. 13).

In the field of early childhood education, where the ways and means of guiding and mediating the learning of young children are deeply entrenched, it is crucial that perspectives gained from the observation of other cultures be brought to bear on existing practice. The significance of this research is in helping early childhood education practitioners in North America adopt a position of openness and possibility. Opening to the situatedness of cultural practices can lead to newcomer families feeling more welcome and that the hopes and expectations they hold for their children are supported in early learning and care programs. Furthermore, methods of guidance and mediation used by refugee families may prove worthy of use with children from all families.

Chapter 5 - Phase 1 Results: Mapping the Life Experiences of Refugee Families with Preschool Children

Becoming a Refugee

Refugee families represent a particular situation. In order to understand the adjustment refugees now living in Edmonton make, it is necessary to understand the circumstances that have brought them to Canada, and how these circumstances might have affected them.

Refugees are almost certainly people who had not intended to leave their country of origin. Persons who choose to immigrate have given the decision due consideration and have had time to physically and emotionally prepare themselves for the resettlement process. Such is not the case for refugees, as revealed by an Eritrean mother during my interview with her:

> *Around five in the morning the police came while we were still sleeping. In my case, I was seven months pregnant. I left the house without taking anything. No clothes, no money, nothing… just my daughter and me.*

What impact does such sudden departure from one's home and family have upon established ways of being? What patterns of relating are interrupted and what new patterns are established during this time? What in turn develops once the family is settled in a peaceful location?

Once the flight from "home" has been undertaken, there are four ways persons can be granted refugee status in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005a).

1. In most instances before a person can be considered for resettlement as a refugee, they must leave their country of citizenship, enter another country, and appeal to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR). The UNHCR acts as a referral agency in determining who is accepted for resettlement.

2. Exceptions to the need to appeal to the UNHCR are made in the case of six countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Sierra Leone, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia) where Canada has established a policy of accepting appeals directly to the Canadian mission serving those regions.
3. Asylum-seekers may appeal to the federal government for refugee status upon arrival in Canada.
4. Persons can enter Canada as sponsored refugees.

The time one waits for a decision regarding their relocation can be lengthy. One Sudanese woman when asked about her experience recalls.

> *It took almost two years because there are many people. Many people do not want to come to Canada because it takes a long time. For some people the wait is three or four years.*

The situation of each refugee family is distinct; some may have been able to escape before unrest in their home country arose, while others will have braved severe atrocities before being able to flee. The following recollections gathered during Phase 1, describe the variety of ways families experience unrest and resettlement.

Being a Refugee

Many refugees endured years of hardship and waiting in a refugee camp, as a Kurdish woman who participated in a focus group describes.

> *You cannot imagine how we spent our whole life in a refugee camp. To be a Kurd from a mountain, a very beautiful cool weather country, with water everywhere and then go to the desert where even we do not have water to drink. We were kicked out and moved from a heaven to a hell.*

Not all refugee families relocate to camps. This Sudanese mother speaks of her situation after fleeing to Cairo, Egypt.

> *There is no security. One day I was not well and did not go to work so I went to the medical clinic. It happened that on that day people were caught and taken back to Sudan. They were put in a goods train with their children. They were just caught on the street. I was very, very lucky. Those that went back, I am sure that one hundred percent of them were killed.*

Many Afghan refugees who participated in a focus group had fled to Iran shortly after the Taliban came to power. They recall that time in the following way.

> *It was very difficult when the Taliban came. I made it to Iran all by myself with my children. After my husband was murdered, we hid in the mountains for 40 days; the Taliban constantly threatened us. We made a caravan that fit seven families and we left for Iran.*

Many refugee family members are left separated from one another for extended periods. A Somali father, who gained status as a refugee claimant in Canada, was away from his wife and children for four years before he was in a financial position to sponsor them to come to Canada. He shares these memories.

> *During that time, I felt lonely; because I missed my family, but because of the war in Somalia, there was no telephone, etc… it was hard for me to communicate. Sometimes, I really wanted to go back because it was very difficult for me. I was here thinking that my family was there and they might be killed.*

When considering the position of refugee families from a sociocultural-historical point of view, there is more to regard as influencing factors than just the time of crisis. Literature describing the refugee situation commonly describes three phases of influence, pre-migration or pre-flight, trans-migration or flight, and post-migration or resettlement (Beiser, Dion, Gotowiec, Hyman & Vu, 1995; Frazel & Stein, 2002; Hamilton & Moore, 2004; Lustig, et al. 2004).

Whether a refugee forced into migration and resettlement, or an immigrant by choice, newcomers to a country contend with many challenges. The Canadian Council for Refugees (1998), in an examination of settlement services for refugees shows the social, economic, cultural, and political spheres all play an interconnected role in determining the speed and fluidity with which newcomers settle and integrate. As well, "personal characteristics such as gender, age, skill level, education, and past experiences all play a role" (p. 13). Bloch (2002) maintains that structural factors, personal factors, community factors, and reasons for migration all interplay to determine the settlement experience of refugees. Abu-Laban, Derwing, Krahn, Mulder, and Wilkinson (1999) base their study into the settlement experiences of refugees in Alberta upon the premise that "the integration of refugees into the social and economic fabric of Canadian society is a complex phenomenon, influenced by community structure and demographics, as well as by refugees' human capital and other personal characteristics" (p. iv).

In researching the reasons why refugees in Alberta choose to leave their host community, Abu-Laban, et al. (1999) identified several factors that influence the settlement experiences of newcomers. Included in these factors are (a) experiences before arrival, (b) access to settlement services, (c) welcome provided by the host community, (d) openness to cultural diversity (host community and newcomers), (e) discrimination and racism, (f) degree to which the host community is able to provide for important settlement issues, and (g) degree to which hopes and aspirations have been realized. Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) present the factors that influence settlement as (a) the social and economic capital brought to the new country, (b) legal status (i.e. refugee, refugee claimant, or immigrant), (c) race, (d) colour, (e) language, (f) economic opportunities, (g) neighbourhood characteristics (i.e. quality of schools, segregation, neighbourhood decay, violence), (h) anti-immigrant sentiment, and (i) racism. Potocky-Tripodi (2002), approaching this issue as a social worker, outlines cultural issues, reception from host country, opportunity structure of host country, level of discrepancy between expectations held by immigrants and the reality of their new life, and degree of cumulative stress throughout migration process, as determinants in how the settlement process for refugees will proceed (p. 18). This final point, "the degree of cumulative stress," is typically the determinant that besets refugees (as opposed to immigrants) with additional burdens or challenges to overcome. The following comments provided by the Phase 1 research participants serve to illustrate the many settlement issues confronted by refugees living in Edmonton.

Factors That Impact Resettlement

Decreased Socioeconomic Status

Many refugees, before the circumstances of displacement, were living peaceful and fruitful lives. Now in Canada, hoping for a better life, refugees I spoke with made it clear that they are thankful for the opportunity to live safely in Canada, they are grateful, but at the same time, this experience can be tinged with bitterness due to the financial pressure they feel. This Sudanese woman explains her feelings.

> *People back home think now that we are in Canada they are looking for our help. They always send letters saying, "help us, help us, help us!" Here we are just living with this money, to have enough to eat for today; we do not have any money to put in the bank or something like this.*

The opinions of Canadians regarding the financial situation of refugees are an additional burden as this Sudanese woman describes.

> *People at school say, "Oh you people are immigrants you are lucky you get free money." However, this money is nothing, and if you are absent one day, they cut the money. If my baby is sick, I have to go to the hospital, and I miss one day they cut the money. If my husband finds a part-time job and they know this, they will cut the money. We are just stuck in one place.*

Canadian born citizens rarely know the details regarding the financial arrangements the federal government of Canada makes with refugees. Government-sponsored refugee families upon arrival in Canada are provided with financial assistance from the federal government, at a social assistance rate, for one or two years depending upon their circumstances. During this time, they can qualify for 1250 hours of free language instruction in either English or French. Following this first year, refugees in Alberta may apply for student financial assistance and continue attending language classes or some other form of educational program. Both the year of settlement support income and the student finance income present numerous barriers for refugees. This Sudanese mother comments on the difficulties presented by government financial assistance.

> *Finances are a problem. We are receiving child support but it is not enough, yet if you go and work part-time then in April when you do your tax return they say you worked a lot so they cut your money. Even the money the Alberta government is giving us for student finance is not enough so one has to add to this somehow.*

After this initial period of government financial support, refugees are expected to be self-sufficient. The thought of this brings fear to this Congolese mother.

> *I am afraid because after two years my sponsorship will be cut off. This is worrying because I do not speak English, but I will have to look for a job. The daycare will be very expensive for me. Therefore, I will have to stay at home*

> *and look after the children, because I cannot move and leave the children alone.*

In addition to the expectation of financial self-sufficiency after one or two years, it is expected that any travel expenses the federal government of Canada incurred in bringing the family or the individual to Canada will start to be repaid. This sum of money can vary from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars depending on the size of the family. For most refugees this comes as a surprise, as this Sudanese woman reveals.

> *When you are told that you are going to go to Canada, everything is done for you free, your medical, they check you, everything is done free. No one thinks that one day I will have to pay that back. When we came here, they said ok, we did this for you and this for you and this for you, including the flight to Edmonton, you have to pay this money back from the first day you began the immigration process.*

Interest on these loans begins accruing after three years. If refugees are unable to begin making payments, the federal government garnishees their Goods and Service Tax credits, their child tax benefits, and income tax refunds. Most refugees are in the position of wanting to sponsor relatives still in the home country to come to Canada; this can only be done when their own "Settlement Loan" is repaid.

Obtaining recognition for work qualifications and experience is frequently mentioned as an obstacle to parents trying to rebuild their lives in Edmonton, as this Somali mother explains.

> *If I were back home, my husband would be working as an engineer. Here he has tried and he cannot get any kind of jobs up to the standard of his professional job. He is just depressed.*

Another Somali woman describes the burdens placed on refugee families when affordable housing is not available.

> *So many things are affecting my parenting. One is that I have eight children of my own and my younger sister who is like one of my children, so I have nine children, and am expecting my tenth. We live in a 3-bedroom apartment. The children, some of the children sleep in the living room, so that is really affecting the raising of the children. The apartment is overcrowded, and there are complaints from the neighbours. It is lots of pressure.*

Once relocated to Canada for resettlement, the socioeconomic status of refugee families continues to be below that of their pre-migration situation. The Edmonton Social Planning Council (November, 2004) reports that children in visible minority families are "two to three times as likely as the general population to be living in poverty." A British Columbia study examining poverty among immigrants and refugees living in that province identified three key factors that result in high rates of poverty among this group, (a) unemployment and underemployment, (b) limited access to supports and services, and (c) government policies that create and tolerate poverty (Spigelman, 1998). Many refugees, who were accustomed to a middle-class or higher level of socioeconomic status during the pre-migration phase, suddenly positioned in poverty or near poverty circumstances, find this has a tremendous negative effect upon their family life.

Of a different nature is the effect upon family life when refugees who have known only refugee camp circumstances suddenly find themselves trying to live up to the expectations of "middle-class" Canadian culture as these Kurdish mothers attest.

> *We need more money and more support and free good activities like soccer and hockey; it is so expensive. There is no way for low-income families to get involved in activities, serious ones. There is some, but not serious ones. There is a little bit, but it is not enough.*
>
> *Because the money we get is very limited we cannot for example buy them good stuff; any toys, any extras or have money to take them somewhere to have fun like West Edmonton Mall, the money is limited for our children, we cannot take care of them as they deserve, when it comes to money.*

Suddenly located into the seeming opulence of life in Edmonton, many refugee parents find themselves and their children caught up in the allure of material possessions and opportunities.

Lack of Community and Family Support

Many refugees coming to Canada are ready and able to get on with their lives without the help of professional intervention, what they simply lack is the extended family and community support they had relied upon in their home country. In speaking with refugee parents, this issue comes up repeatedly, as is reflected in the words of this Eritrean mother.

> *If you have your family you can pretty much go through any problem, it is much easier. Here you are with your partner and there is no other person. The guidance that you would need from other members of your family like your mom is not here so it is even very difficult for many of us to have good communication with our partners. That piece is a very important piece. So now we are just raising our children the way we think it is right.*

Instead of the close supportive community they are used to, many refugees struggle alone. This father from the African French speaking community describes the situation in the following way.

> *Here people are isolated and lonely, and it is very difficult for newcomers to integrate. They expect the same closeness with their neighbour just like it is in Africa, but it is not the case.*

This Congolese single mother with five children under the age of seven states:

> *I am very limited in my ability to get around even to pay the bills. I cannot leave the children alone. I feel like I am in a prison here.*

Children as well as parents feel the loss of extended family as this Sudanese mother acknowledges.

> *The little one* [daughter] *misses her grandmother. Whenever she sees an older woman, she calls her "grandma." I sometimes feel bad, because my children do not really know their grandparents.*

This Sudanese mother explains that being bereft of extended family support is especially problematic following childbirth.

> *The next day after my baby was born; I was back in the kitchen. I had no choice. I felt bad, sad, and lonely. There is nobody here. I think if I was back home my sister, my aunty, my mom, everyone would be there, but now here we do not have a choice. I think one thing that is important here is that my husband and I cannot do everything.*

Transplanted into the culture of independence that dominates Canadian life, refugee families formerly reliant upon extensive family and community support find it difficult to cope.

School and preschool locations could become vital places of support and an avenue for social inclusion for refugee families if the will of all involved so directed. Hamilton and Moore (2004), referring to the "school-family-community interface," suggest educational settings, places where large numbers of families are already associated, become the hub of community life by offering adult education opportunities, language classes, and social events on site. Effective communication channels between home and school, established through the help of cultural brokers, and a thorough induction process, along with avenues where parents and children can share their cultural knowledge will benefit all persons, not just refugee families. Ensuring that schools and preschools are safe places, where racism and bullying are actively affronted is critical. Finally, administrative leadership, staff professional development, and programmes that expand the knowledge of the host community about different cultures are central. "The key to developing schools which effectively educate refugee students is to create mechanisms that facilitate and foster positive and supportive interactions between the different systems (parents, teacher, schools, community and service providers), with the child as the focal point" (p. 95).

Unfamiliar Childrearing Practices

Along with struggling to raise their children without the help of family and neighbours, refugee parents are confused about how to guide and discipline their children. Most refugee parents regard their indigenous ways of parenting as being in direct opposition to what they see and hear around them. African French speaking fathers state the following.

> *The recommendation here in Canada is the only way to discipline your child is to be a friend with your child.* [Other fathers laugh in knowing agreement.]
>
> *What is hard for immigrants regarding children is that children here have bad behaviour.*
>
> *If you do not act as your children want, they will tell you to go away or call the police.*
>
> *In Africa, we teach our children respect and moral values. It can always happen that a child does not listen, but this is rare, and his dad or any member of the tribe or close relative will punish him.*

One Cambodian mother reflects the view I heard repeatedly in focus group discussions.

> *Here it is harder to discipline the children. Back home, we can discipline the children by spanking them but here we cannot do that.*

Parents worry about the influence Canadian society will have on their children as was stated by Sudanese mothers.

> *We are just worried that children will start smoking early, like 10 years of age, we do not like that. We hope that our children will not develop that habit. Smoking and drugs, most immigrants are worried about these two things, and having boyfriends and girlfriends at 14 or 15; back home at 18 or 20 that is*

> *not a problem, but early ages we do not like that because we do not have that back home.*

Uneasiness regarding the authorities is another concern, as expressed by this Somali mother.

> *If you speak loudly, calling your children, there is suspicion outside the door there, which makes us very uncomfortable even when we are in our own homes.*

Newcomers struggle with the prevalence of government intervention in the lives of citizens as this Somali mother points out.

> *Back home, if the child is sick and dies, you do not even have to contact anybody. You just go make a grave and you bury your child. It is your child. You are the one who has the pain and the problem.*

Given the perceived gulf that exists between childrearing practices (especially discipline) "back home" and here in Canada, refugee families struggle to know how to guide their children's behaviour. Before coming to Canada, young children were often given a great deal of freedom. Most parents felt there was little to worry about when children were off playing outdoors, and children could be left at home with minimal or no supervision. A Somali mother shared this information.

> *If children are lost, you are not worried, so long as you have not heard on the radio that a car has hit a child. Only then, you are shocked. Even if for 10 days they have disappeared, you do not worry. You know you will get him back.*

Such is not the case in Canada. Children are subjected to a great deal more surveillance here than they would have in their home country, and parents are expected to be the ones to provide this. This increased watchfulness places extra strain upon parent-child relationships.

Corporal punishment, shaming, and ostracism are discouraged in Canadian society. Yet, these are the most prevalent forms of discipline refugee parents talked about using in their home countries.

> *We do not always hit, sometimes we talk seriously to them. Because you know if you hit a child every time, he gets used to it. It is not good to hit them every time, but just from time to time.* (African French speaking father)

> *Yes, we do not hide anything even in school when children get their grades the parents, friends gather, and it is announced who has the top grade. When the bottom of the class is announced everyone comments. Parents will compare them with other children and try to motivate them that way.* (African French speaking father)

> *Bad behaviour in Somalia would mean a child would not have friends. All the members of the community shun the child. If I am a teenager and my neighbour is a teenager who does not respect her mom, yells at her mom, and does not do what her mom tells her to, then I would not be her friend. Everyone would tell the girl that what she is doing is not good. After that, she will come around and change.* (Somali mother)

> *Maybe when a girl matures and if she starts hanging around and sleeping with boys she will have her hair shaved, and she will be locked in one of the homes.* (Somali mother)

Parents wonder what other options are open to them. They see this situation as "all or none." If they are not allowed to use the discipline strategies they are familiar with, their children are sure to succumb to negative behaviours. This lack of parental discipline strategies becomes a problem for families in their own right; it also presents a problem for onlookers who, at times, perceive these struggling newcomer parents as inept.

Changing Roles and Responsibilities of Family Members

When asked about the roles and responsibilities typically assigned to various community and family members back home, this Somali woman makes clear.

> *Back home, when our children are seven years old, they are grown, and they are helpful at home; you are happy, you are settled.*

In describing the roles of men, women, and children in her culture, this African French speaking woman relates the following.

> *In our culture, the man is in charge of bringing money to the family, he has to go to work, and most of the wives stay at home doing household tasks. Things are changing a little, but not too much. For education, homework, many times the children do it alone or if the mother is educated, she helps. If the man has time he can help, or an older cousin or neighbour.*

This African French speaking man concurs.

> *There is a division of labour. There are some activities special for women. The light tasks are for women and the heavy ones are for men. Men go out and work to bring money home to the family. There are some activities reserved for women, but men do all the heavy work. Domestic duties like cooking, doing the laundry, and mopping these are left to women.*

When asked if African fathers play with their children, an African French speaking father replies.

> *Not like here in Canada. In our culture, they play but not the way they do here. We have to keep some distance. To compare with here, there is a gap. The father is the chief in the family, even when playing there is a gap. There are different types of play. Maybe if there is some music I can amuse them and show them how to use some instrument; but according to my culture I cannot go with them into the swimming pool and undress myself with my children to go swimming.*

In Eritrean culture, older family and community members play an essential role in guiding young parents.

> *Back home, the men are guiding the men and the women the women. Parents help us when we are mad. We can always go to them, no matter how late it is.*

The traditional coffee ceremony is a time when this guidance and support is offered.

> *The coffee ceremony is a way to sit down with your neighbour even if you have a long day you get together with your neighbours and that is where you sort out your problems. Someone hosts and everyone sits around and talks. You do all the steps from a to z; which means you roast the coffee beans, you*

> *grind the beans, then you boil it. You do this three times so it takes about one and a half to two hours and the idea is to give you more time so that you can communicate and talk about the issue that has been presented. That is where you solve problems.*

The changing roles that families experience in Canada can have a detrimental influence on family dynamics. African French speaking men express anxiety about what will become of their relationships with their wives in this new culture.

> *People here know how to cope, but immigrant women when they get this freedom they tell the men to take off. The immigrant thinks they are coming to a good country and then they find all these things.*

Refugee families undergo many changes when they settle in Canada. Children formerly considered mature and capable of adult roles and responsibilities, now in Canada are deemed too young to be without adult supervision. Women formerly in a position of financial dependence on their husbands may become the ones to obtain employment and suddenly the established power relationships between husband and wife is reversed. It is common for children to learn the accepted cultural practices and the language more quickly than their parents, thus putting them in a position of cultural broker and caretaker of their parents with respect to social interactions in Canadian society. All these and other disruptions and changes in the familiar roles and responsibilities of family members can lead to confusion and tension. Given the shifts in family roles and responsibilities, traditional childrearing practices are affected. Strategies formerly used to guide and mediate children's learning are no longer effective or accepted in the Canadian context. Families are forced to develop new strategies.

Dealing with Racism and Discrimination

Somali women speak of the racism and discrimination their children are experiencing in Edmonton.

> *My daughter was told by one of the children at school, your mom is ugly and she is always dressing up like Halloween.*
>
> *At school, the teachers are suspicious of our children. They think maybe their hair is not combed or not proper because they have it covered. They are suspicious. I do not like it.*
>
> *I do not want to say that word that they call people, nigger. I do not like to hear that. The other children call our children that.*

An Eritrean mother details this from her daughter's experiences.

> *At school, the teacher does not give her attention or give her answers sometimes. When she asks questions she does not get answers, she does not get any attention. Now it is already recorded in her mind that there is discrimination.*
>
> *One day my daughter and another child were playing and they both fell down. The teacher just pulled up the other child, and did not even see my daughter, and when she came home, she was crying. She said, "They did not even see me and just picked up the other child."*

It is important to look to the arrival of refugee families into Alberta as an opportunity to engage with issues of racism. While the term "race" may be contested, and explanations for "racism" debated (Bannerji, 2000; Collins, 1999; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Lee, 1995; Omni & Winant, 1994), the reality is, refugee parents spoke during focus groups and interviews about concern for their children. Adults are felt to be capable of handling racism and discrimination; the children having to deal with this is what worries parents. They do not want to see their children hurt and unaccepted.

One might wonder what relevance issues of racism and discrimination have for the preschool context. The work of Aboud (1988) in undertaking a meta-analysis of the existing research into children and racism reflects the predominant child development view. Influenced by Piaget and a cognitive approach to child growth and development, many researchers see children lacking the cognitive capability to comprehend issues of racism. Cognitive researchers contend that children are capable of categorizing according to race and to hold negative feelings towards another based on their race, but that preschool age children are not capable of comprehending the abstract complexity of prejudice towards a whole race of people. According to Aboud, it is not until children progress from the preoperational (emotion and sensory dominant stage) to the concrete operational stage of abstraction that they are considered able to see how their individualistic and affective comments reflect an underlying attitude. Aboud proposes that when children have reached approximately seven years of age they are capable of benefiting from an anti-racist curriculum where they are encouraged to, 1) judge others based on internal rather than external attributes, 2) focus more on similarities rather than differences between groups of people, and 3) understand that people holding varying perspectives is acceptable. For children four to seven, who according to Aboud dwell in a dichotomous mind frame where all things are black or white, good or bad; helping them to widen the scope of their emotions and to see the possibility for many ways of being correct ought to be the basis of curriculum designed to alleviate racism.

Taking a sociocultural-historical approach to human development, other researchers (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001; Harris 1998) point to evidence indicating that infants before one year of age are able to categorize people based on gender and age, and race distinctions usually develop somewhere around the age of three. Such authors take a strong stance towards children becoming who they are based on the social world and human relationships they encounter, and refer to the threefold nature of the child's world. One sphere finds children alone in their play and day-to-day activities; a second sphere includes interactions with adults, especially parents, teachers, and relatives. The third sphere, and the most influential, sees children interacting with other children. It is within this complex web of human social relationships that children's thinking about race is conceptualized, and it is here within the social context that we can begin to understand how racism develops.

For most children, experience with racial-ethnic matters begins at birth. Indeed, it may begin before birth, due to stresses put upon some mothers by racist beliefs and behaviours around them. Moreover, the formulations and beliefs about racial and ethnic origin are already in place in the social milieus into which children are born. We live in a society where race is central to social organization at all levels of life, and children are vulnerable to these forces. In interactions with peers and adults, "children both create and receive multiple, complex messages about the meaning of racial group and ethnicity" (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001, p. 153). Children attach meaning to the actions of others. They attach meaning to the social world in which they are located. Children very quickly learn the racial-ethnic roles and identities of the larger society. Just as children learn to speak by being immersed and surrounded by language, so they learn racism when immersed and surrounded by systemic racist practice, policy, and pedagogy.

What can and is being done to prevent such attitudes from developing? What are refugee families doing to help support their children through the pain of non-acceptance? How can the field of early childhood respond to this growing concern? A variety of approaches are suggested. Many books, programs, and strategies exist to foster communication and build relationships between diverse children, staff, and parents in early years care and education settings as a way of managing diversity and building bridges (Gonzalez-Mena, 2006, 2007, 2008; Zepeda, Rothstein-Fisch, Gonzalez-Mena & Trumbull, 2006). Other projects seek to instil values of care and empathy within children in hope of creating cooperation and equity that "will last a lifetime" (Teaching Tolerance Project, 1997). Still others take an anti-bias or anti-racist approach (Bernhard, J., K., 1992; Bernhard, J. K., Lefebvre, M. L., Chud, G. & Lange, R., 1995; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Derman-Sparks, L. & Phillips, C., B., 1997; Derman-Sparks, L. & Ramsey, P., G., 2006; Mallory & New, 1994; Ramsey, P., G., 2004).

Despite attempts by such authors to bring to the forefront of early years care and education a move to interrogate power and privilege that stands behind racism and discrimination, "multiculturalism" discourse and pedagogy, variously applied as tokenistic cultural gestures, still predominates in early childhood settings. "Woks and chop sticks" in the housekeeping area, picture books depicting life in other parts of the world, and the celebration of ethnic holidays remain the kinds of efforts given over to dealing with the "problem" of diversity and pluralism. The question remains, how advantageous is multicultural early childhood education as an anti-racist intervention? Is it effective? Is it simply neutral or benign, or may it as some suggest, in fact contribute to the growing problem of systemic racism?

Bannerji (2000) believes liberal multiculturalism fails to deal with issues of racism in that it fails to take in to account gender and class power relations. Multiculturalism sets up an "us" and "them" dichotomy, where the Euro-white, hegemonic "us," attempts to gloss over power relations and join "them" to create a "we." "There is an assumption that this Canada is a singular entity, a moral, cultural and political essence, neutral of power, both in terms of antecedents and consequences" (p. 104). That Canada's colonial past has set up relations of power that continue to oppress people to this day is completely ignored, glossed over, and white-washed. "If one stands on the dark side of the nation in Canada everything looks different. The transcendent, universal and unifying claims of its multiculturally legitimated ideological state apparatus become susceptible to questions" (p. 104).

One of the many things Bannerji (2000) questions in relation to multicultural discourse is the terminology used to refer to people. Whether visible minorities, ethnics, immigrants, refugees, new Canadians, etc., a situation of not being what one should be is set up. There are two kinds of people here, Canadians, and all others; the Canadians of course being of European white descent. "The term visible minorities is a great example: one is instantly struck by its reductive character, in which peoples from many histories, languages, cultures and politics are reduced to a distilled abstraction" (p. 111).

What does Bannerji (2000) suggest as a better alternative to multiculturalism? She calls forth struggle, contestation and disturbance; an organized resistance to all "others" being categorized, labelled and boxed; reforms that will guarantee all people autonomy. "Recognition needs respect and dignity, its basic principle is accepting the autonomy of the other, and being honest about power relations which hinder this autonomy" (p. 149).

Having grown up an immigrant attending white suburban schools, Zine (2002) echoes many of Bannerji's claims, "In a multicultural paradigm, the integration of marginalized cultures is seen as an add-on to an otherwise Eurocentric curriculum, and these cultures are usually relegated to events such as 'multicultural week' or 'Black history month'" (p. 37). What is vital Zine believes is an anti-racist approach where issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability can all be looked at in their interrelating positions of power and subordination.

To remain within the multicultural approach of "exoticizing" other cultures will not lead to equity. What Zine (2002) and others propose is a "multi-centric" approach to education, where the dominant Eurocentric approach is decentred and other ways of knowing are privileged alongside the dominant discourse. Zine feels this approach is critical in equipping youth, whether they live in cosmopolitan centres or homogeneous rural communities, to understand and negotiate the globalized world around them.

Pursuing globalization as a theme fused within multiculturalism, McLaren (2001) urges:

> No task is more urgent for multicultural and intercultural education today than to re-understand its project as that of accounting for the exploitation of people of color in materialist, historical, and global terms. Multicultural education,

> for the most part, is little more than the interminable deferral of this urgent historical and class accounting. (p. xii)

Dei and Calliste (2000) feel the "goodwill, tolerance, and understanding" emphasized by multiculturalism is inadequate to deal with racism. They call for anti-racist education that will "identify, challenge and change the values, structures and behaviours that perpetuate systemic racism and other forms of societal oppressions" (p. 21). How they propose to do this is through an "interrogation of Whiteness." Many others including Bedard (2000), Bonnett (1997), Frankenberg (1993), Lipsitz (1998), McLaren (2001), Pearce (2003), and Roediger (1994) agree with the focus of decentring and problematizing Whiteness.

What is referred to as Whiteness is far more than skin colour, though that is very much part of it, but also the power structures and privileges that come with being part and parcel of White society. One need not be White to be inculcated in Whiteness. "It is a power base defining normalcy. Notions of meritocracy, excellence, ethical neutrality and rugged individualism are rationalized in the understandings of Whiteness" (Dei, 2000, p. 28). It is time for White teachers to challenge their understanding of knowledge production and its connection to their identities as White people, and begin creating new knowledges that reflect the political agenda of anti-racism education instead of remaining complacent behind the mask of multiculturalism.

Coping with Mental Health Issues

In addition to the complex and interrelated issues affecting all immigrants, due to the forced nature of migration, refugees will undoubtedly have experienced many losses; their homes, possessions, careers, finances, and most significantly, loved ones. As a result, "unlike those who freely and deliberately choose to start a new life in Canada, their thoughts on arrival may be focused more on what they have left behind than on their future here" (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998, p. 13). Virtually all refugees have left family and friends in the home country. They are often burdened by worry for those still living in difficult circumstances as this Congolese father offers.

> *Right now, we do not know where exactly our family members are, we do not know whether they are alive or have been killed. At times when that comes back to mind, it brings sorrow and pain.*

A Sudanese woman, now safe in Canada knows this about the situation in Sudan.

> *It is getting worse. People in the towns have had their homes broken into, they have been taken to the desert without water or anything, and the children and older people are going to die there because of no water, food, or anything. The situation in Sudan is not good because everything is difficult.*

Kurdish women share these accounts.

> *In the camp, I still have a brother with eight children and they live in a tent with no water or power. All peoples surrounding Kurdish people are our enemy.*
>
> *I left two brothers behind one has five children and one has eight. We all have family left behind in the refugee camp struggling to survive life in hell.*
>
> *We called our families over there and they said it had been 40 days without any water to have a bath and they do not even have enough food to eat.*

Whereas immigrants may hold the hope of one day returning to their country of origin, for refugees this is most times impossible. One Kurdish mother claims:

> *They took our right away, to belong to the land.*

This Sudanese mother relates how children too are left with feelings of uncertainty regarding life in the "home country."

> *My son says if there is fighting or violence in Africa "I do not want to go there," but I say "no." I do not want him to grow up thinking our country is bad. I try to tell him that there is not only war in Sudan, that there can also be good things there.*

Some children feel a responsibility to help their family return to their home country, as this Sudanese mother continues.

> *These days there is a peace agreement in Sudan and so when they ask if we are going to Sudan we say yes, but we have to save some money so they cannot be asking to buy this and this and this. When they find a penny on the ground they say here this is for tickets to Sudan.*

Even if returning were possible, many parents acknowledge that for their children such a move would be difficult.

> *I wish to go back, but I do not know if my children can go. They want to, but I do not know if they would be able to stay there because their life is different, but for me it makes no difference because I know the life there from before and I know I can live there.* (Sudanese mother)

Parents may experience feelings of guilt, failure, or grief for not having been able to provide for the basic safety and well being of their children. This is illustrated by one Eritrean mother's words.

> *I do not want them* [my children] *to suffer like I did. Especially the first one, I feel so bad for her, because she saw everything. She saw how they treated us. She had a good start, and then all of a sudden her life is on the run.*

Family members may have been separated, as is often the case when fathers are forced to go into hiding because of threats upon their lives. Another Eritrean mother recalls.

> *My husband was not there with us; he was already hiding somewhere else. We knew if they found him in our home, they would arrest him and deport him without money, without anything.*

This Eritrean mother indicates that parents and children alike may have witnessed or experienced terrors of war that can leave lasting scars.

> *She* [daughter] *does not like police at all. Even here, in Canada she is scared when she sees them, because, the Kenyan police were chasing us everywhere. She saw us when we were scared of them and talking about them.*

Knowing you cannot return "home," fearing for loved ones left behind to suffer, dealing with the effects of having witnessed and experienced traumatic events, and coping in a foreign context without the support of family and friends, these and other factors can lead to emotional or physical ill health. A government task force looking into the mental health issues affecting immigrants and refugees in Canada drew these conclusions:

> Negative public attitudes, separation from family and community, inability to speak English or French, and failure to find employment are among the most powerful causes of emotional distress. Persons whose pre-migration experience has been traumatic, women from traditional cultures, adolescents and the elderly also are at high risk for experiencing difficulties during resettlement. (Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees, 1988, p. 91)

Though plagued with feelings of displacement, trauma, and grief, refugee parents are in the situation of needing and wanting to provide for their children. Given this reality, what strategies do refugee families use to facilitate the learning of their preschool children during this time?

Children too feel the many losses they have experienced. The grief children carry however, often goes unnoticed. Fantino and Colak (2001) attribute this lack of recognition of children's grief to the belief that children are resilient and adapt quickly to their new circumstances. They also suggest that while children are less likely than adults to talk openly about their feelings, perhaps the reason we do not hear children speak of their losses is that we do not listen.

Moro (2002) reports on the mental health of infants and children born in France to economic immigrant parents. Though not specific to the refugee population, the research of Moro and her associates provides relevant information. Moro begins with the view that since children under the age of three years possess "little or no resistance to harm or aggression," they are particularly psychologically vulnerable (p. 156). Three factors play into the effects trauma might have upon young children: (a) the child's innate vulnerability, (b) the environment that surrounds the child, and (c) the form and intensity of the aggression or exposure to harm. Why one child will come through trauma relatively unscathed while another will not is the result of the complex interaction of these three factors. Moro believes children of immigrant parents can be victims of trauma simply by nature of their parents' experiences in a new and foreign land. Moro believes that even the smallest of external or internal change can lead to a "large dysfunction, tragic suffering, and a slowing or halt in developmental progress" (p. 157).

In a comparative analysis made between immigrant and non-immigrant children under 12 months, Moro (2002) found within the immigrant population higher incidences of infants suffering from depression, and a higher infant mortality rate. In considering the intellectual capacity of immigrant children 5 to 8 years old born in France to immigrant parents, study results indicate these children lag behind non-immigrant children in phonological awareness, problem comprehension, and mathematics. Fifty-five percent understood but were not fluent in their first language, and 25% barely understood and did not speak the first language of their parents. Those children with the most refined first language also had the richest French and the best scholastic results (p. 167). These results are considered indicators of the family struggle and disarray.

Moro (2002) points to the loss of "mothering techniques" that results when families leave their home cultural environment. Taken out of context, these mothering techniques become "rigid, and are no longer effective" (p. 163). Children therefore do not receive the nurturing care and attention required to thrive. Moro advocates for research that will identify culturally specific mother-child interactions in order to be able to offer therapeutic intervention that supports innate mothering techniques.

Taking a psychoanalytic stance, Moro (2002) considers that an acute psychological vulnerability comes to all women with pregnancy, and puts the mother in a fragile state. Normally in the home culture, a caring community would mediate this fragility. When this support is unavailable, the fragility and vulnerability of the mother becomes transferred to the newborn. The mother in experiencing a lack of "holding" responds to her infant in like manner. Furthermore, a parent's psyche, being in a fractured state because of learning to adapt and live in a new culture, is projected towards the children. Parents rather than being in a position of competence, ready and eager to facilitate their children's exploration of the world, are confused and fearful of the world they are expected to introduce their children to. Moro reveals:

> The child of immigrants who grows up in a transcultural situation consequently acquires cultural structuring built on a splitting between two

> worlds of different natures. Because it is not unified, this structuring is necessarily uncertain and fragile. (p. 173)

Children born to immigrant parents are forced to split their filiations; they learn to live in two worlds. This splitting Moro believes is the core cause of psychological vulnerability for children. This process of splitting can arise as an opportunity for creativity and continual change or can lead to trauma and illness.

While in the research conducted by Moro (2002) it appears that children born to immigrant parents suffer from more psychopathology and have lower intellectual attainment than children born of non-immigrant parents, the causality for this is not fully understood. Moro is clear to point out that these results are descriptive and not prescriptive, however the widely held assumption is that if the child is not well, this is due to some inadequacy in the mother. I question instead the role the "host" culture plays in contributing to the perceived poor outcomes for some infants of immigrant families. In denying refugee and immigrant mothers the freedom and support necessary to continue parenting their children in ways consistent with their indigenous knowing, do we contribute to the fractured sense of the mother's self that can adversely affect her infant?

Most mental health research related to early childhood is concerned with the mother – infant dyad and the formation of "healthy attachment." Attachment theory has its roots in Freudian psychoanalytic theory. D. W. Winnicott and John Bowlby are credited with establishing the importance of the infant-mother dyad to healthy emotional development (Bowlby, 1982, 1988, 1995; Kahr, 2002; Shepherd, Johns & Robinson, 1996). Bowlby (1995) asserts:

> What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment. ... It is this complex, rich, and rewarding relationship with the mother in the early years, varied in countless ways by relations with the father and with siblings, that child psychiatrists and many others now believe to underlie the development of character and of mental health. (p. 110)

Siegel (1999) combines attachment theory with neurobiology to establish his theory of mind development. "One essential message is that the developing mind uses the states of an attachment figure in order to help organize the functioning of its own states" (p. 70). Typically, the attachment figure in an infant's life is the mother. The way in which the mother or other primary caregiver responds to the infant greatly determines the development of the infant's mind. In turn, the responses of the infant greatly influence the caregiver. This "affect attunement" or "co-regulation" is what serves to bond infant and adult as well as shape the neural connections of the brain.

Attachment, attunement, or co-regulation is like an intimate dance, with neither partner the designated leader. The infant reads the emotional state of the caregiver; the caregiver reads the emotional state of the infant. Both possess a keen awareness of the other's presence or absence, but more importantly an awareness of the other's emotional state. This reading of and attunement towards each other's emotional state is made possible by the evolutionary determined neural brain structure while at the same time the process of attachment functions to reflexively shape the structure of the brain neural network. The neurobiology of the brain makes attachment possible, while at the same time the process of attachment develops the neurobiology of the brain. "Human connections create neuronal connections" (Siegel, 1999, p. 85). The "quality" of human connections determines the shape neuronal connections take, neuronal connections in turn determine the mind of an individual, and the mind of an individual largely determines how one functions in life.

In the overview to *Attachment Across Cultures,* a Health Canada (n.d.) funded research project, attachment, "the deep emotional bond formed between children and one or more adults, usually a parent or caregiver," is considered a universal/cross-cultural phenomenon (p. 5). All nations and all people are considered to have attachment practices, values, and beliefs that influence how they interact with young children. Effective attachment practices are considered those that promote positive and enduring relationships between parents and their children (overview, p. 3). The aim of the Health Canada research was to inform early childhood service providers of attachment practices, values and beliefs that are common across cultures as well as to identify those that, though they differ from Canadian practices, are considered positive, effective and healthy attachment practices, values, and beliefs in refugee families entering Canada.

While it may be helpful to have a list of factors that influence the ability of refugee parents to form strong attachments with their children, as it might be helpful to know how attachment practices of various cultures compare and contrast; the key issue is how the experiences of the trans-migration and resettlement phases mediate or intertwine with the indigenous values, beliefs, and practices of refugee parents. In other words, how do the relationships between refugee parents and children change when pressured into a new way of life? How are their familiar ways of relating transmogrified under new circumstances?

The whole concept of attachment should be considered in a new way given what is known about the communal way of life most refugee families experience before coming to Canada. How does Bowlby's (1995) description of a "warm, intimate, and continuous relationship" with a mother or mother substitute stand in comparison with the statement made by a Somali mother that, "*Whatever house they went into it is like their mom is in there*."

Attachment theory has developed within a Eurocentric framework. How do conceptions of attachment, developed within this paradigm, fit with the family dynamics of refugee families? When we search for attachment through the lenses of psychoanalytic thinking and do not find it, we necessarily assume a lack of attachment when perhaps we are missing the attachment because it is displayed in ways foreign to us.

Furthermore, it is from a position of dysfunction and mental illness that the whole idea of attachment presented itself. Early researchers were seeking connections between adult psychosis and childhood experiences. When similarities between the way psychotic patients act and the way young children act in the absence of their mothers were observed, attachment theory was born. Psychiatrists, especially those with psychoanalytic leanings, using the strongly scientific medical model, suggest that all manner of emotional distress in children and adults is the result of a failure in attachment at an early age. This seems overly simplistic given the complex nature of human development.

Before we are able to make judgments about a lack of attachment between refugee parents and their children, we need to understand what health and mental illness look like within the context of their society. Is it possible that what appears a lack of attachment in one culture may be considered a healthy relationship in another?

At least two scenarios present themselves in this consideration of attachment. First, that the trans-migration process disrupts attachment, and second, if by chance there has been no disruption, there remains great risk that disruption will occur during the resettlement phase. Both these assumptions approach families from a position of expecting failure rather than success, or deficiency rather than capacity. While not to diminish the very real trauma and grief many refugee families live with, not all is negative. While speaking with a Kurdish youth, born and raised in a refugee camp in Iraq prior to gaining asylum in Canada at the age of nineteen, she smiles while recalling the joy she felt as a child when it rained and she was able to fashion dolls to play with out of mud. This speaks to a side of the refugee child experience that is left untold. Salgado (2000) having photographed refugee children in different parts of the world writes in the preface to his collection of photographs of refugee children, "When they see a camera, they jump with excitement, laughing, waving, pushing each other in the hope of being photographed. Sometimes their very joy gets in the way of recording what is happening to them. How can a smiling child represent deep misfortune?" The mental health and well being of refugee families is undoubtedly very complex.

Maintaining Home Language and Culture

Refugee parents want their children to have Canadian peers, while at the same time maintaining their home language and culture as this Kurdish mother says.

> *It is good for our children to be with other Canadian children and with children from our own culture. It will give them more chances to learn about both Canadian culture and our community.*

The Kurds are in a precarious position with respect to Heritage language retention. Due to the suppression of their language during exile, they may be at greater risk of losing their language than other cultural groups. Kurds living in Iran, Turkey, and the north of Iraq were not allowed to openly speak the Kurdish language. Only Kurds living in the south of Iraq were allowed to speak their own language.

Though strongly nationalistic, the Kurds are also eager to settle into life in Canada. Kurdish mothers want their children to be part of the Kurdish community as well as the Canadian community as this Kurdish mother explains.

> *We are happy about our friends in our community. We are very connected in our Kurdish community, but we do not want to keep our children only with children in our community because it will keep them from learning the language. For us it is better for our children to be with other Canadian children to learn the language. They would benefit from this friendship.*

As well, this mother points out the importance of Kurdish children being involved in Canadian preschool programs.

> *It would be a chance for them to learn, to learn the language. At the beginning, it is very hard for the children to adapt, to be friends with the other Canadian children because they do not know the language. It is very hard. We do not like the children to be by themselves. The children are not happy.*

One Somali mother attests to children's ability to grow up bilingual.

> *My children, if they see a Somali person they speak Somali. If they see you, they speak English. They know; right away, they can find out which language you speak. They speak Somali, and they speak English.*

This same mother revealed the strategy she uses to be sure her children retain the Somali language.

> *When they speak English, I say I do not understand what they are saying so they have to speak Somali. I want them to be able to speak to their grandparents.*

Cambodian parents relay their frustration with trying to maintain their home language.

> *I want to teach my children Khmer, but it is very hard, they do not want to learn it, they want to learn English. At school, they are only speaking English.*
>
> *My children speak only English. If I speak to them in Khmer, they will speak to me in English.*
>
> *When my daughter first started school she did not speak much English, but now she wants to only speak English. I really want her to keep speaking Khmer otherwise I cannot talk with her.*

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006) reports that in 2005, over 30 % of the refugees who arrived in Canada spoke neither English nor French. What impact does this have upon the school readiness and school success of refugee children? What strategies are refugee families using to help meet their goals of bilingualism/biculturalism for their children? How might the early childhood community be responsive to this issue?

North American researchers in the field of language acquisition, twenty and thirty years ago were sceptical about children's ability to learn more than one language simultaneously, and in deed, whether or not such practices were "desirable" (Gingras, 1983). In actuality, in other parts of the world, children growing up exposed to multiple languages have always quite naturally and successful grown into multilingual adults. The question of relevance here is how to best support bilingualism and multilingualism in the Canadian context.

It would seem the arguments regarding what approach to take in supporting families to maintain their home language and culture often have more to do with adult issues of power and control than they do about what is "best" for children. The desires for uniformity on the one hand, and the pressures to allow for diversity are the focus of much debate (Bourne & Reid, 2003). The voices of newcomer parents are clear, they want their children to maintain their home language and culture while at the same time learning English and becoming part of their Canadian peer groups.

In the case of refugee families especially, having been forced to leave all that is familiar to them and relocate to Canada, they often times cling tenaciously to the only thing they have that is truly theirs, their language and culture. It is common for newcomers to be more traditional in their ways and beliefs while in Canada than they would be if still living in their home country. As a society, we want newcomers to successfully integrate into Canadian society; it would seem that disavowing them of their home language and culture is likely to lead to societal discord rather than harmony.

The value of bilingualism and multilingualism is often justified on economic terms; the argument is, children growing up in a globalized economy will stand a better chance of becoming employed if they are fluent in more than one language. While not denying the relevance of this perspective, I prefer to look at the issue from the standpoint of what helps children and families feel part of Canadian life, and particularly Canadian education systems. A great deal of research points to the importance of children being supported in their efforts to maintain their home language and culture in order that they do not feel a pull to split their identity (Baker & Hornberger, 2001; Cummins, 2001; Howes, 2003; National Centre for Languages, n.d.; Woods, Boyle & Hubbard, 1999). Too often children feel they have to leave their "home self" at the curb of the schoolyard, and pick this identity back up as they reach the curb outside their home at the end of the day.

It is sometimes felt that it is the parents' job to guarantee their own children keep their home language and culture, that education settings have no responsibility here. In actuality, in today's world, children of all persuasions are growing up in the context of "multiliteracies" (Cummins & Sayers. 1995; New London Group, 1996). It is not simply linguistic and cultural literacies that education settings have to learn to accommodate, but also multiple forms of technological and expressive communication. The question is not whether educators want to welcome these multiliteracies into their classrooms; they are already here, and resources to help teachers develop competency in this area are available (Cummins, Brown & Sayers, 2007; Faltis, 2006; Freeman, 2004; Hamayan & Freeman, 2006; Ovando, Combs & Collier, 2006). The only thing lacking is the will.

Too often teachers are heard making exasperated statements about "having their hands tied," being "bound by the curriculum," or "having to teach to the test." Within the early childhood context, comments such as "daycare licensing says so," or "this is the way we are supposed to do things," and "children need to know this before they get to school," are common pronouncements. The reality is, teachers can make "choices" regarding how they teach. In deed, "School improvement is too important to leave to the hands of politicians or school administrators – teachers must take the lead in initiating change" (Cummins, Brown & Sayers, 2007, p. 226).

Teachers can take steps so that students from culturally diverse backgrounds find their educational encounters relevant by providing opportunities for them to "engage their prior understandings" (Donovan & Bransford, 2005). By activating the prior knowledge children bring to the classroom, children are able to cognitively engage, invest their identities, and contribute their interactions to the learning community (Cummins, Brown & Sayers, 2007). The acquisition of literacy skills reaches beyond learning to read the text, it involves "critical literacy," reading between the lines, and negotiating identities, finding one's place in the discourse. Pedagogy has the potential to open up or close down identities, to ignite curiosity, or destroy creativity, to invite social commitment, or breed indifference.

> Pedagogy oriented toward the development of critical literacy can be termed a *transformative* orientation because its goal is to enable students both to understand how power is exercised within society and to use their democratic rights to change aspects of their society that they consider unjust or discriminatory. (emphasis in original, p. 39)

Schools and preschools have a key role to play in helping the children of refugee families find their place in their new location. Allowing for the inclusion of home language and culture in everyday classroom interactions does more than help promote multilingualism and multiculturalism, it helps prepare all students to be active citizens in the world (Cummins, 2000).

For refugee children and their families, resettling in Canada without knowledge of either English or French leads to numerous challenges. Children with an already established grasp of their home language encounter problems when they enter Canadian preschool and school settings where their home culture and language are not honoured. As a result, these children are cut off from the social world of their peers as well as not being able to bring their indigenous cultural knowing into fruition in the classroom (Soto, 2002).

Semali (2002) addresses the importance of assisting refugee families in the maintenance of their home language and culture. In doing so, home language becomes a source of dignity and respect, rather than, humiliation and shame.

> Language must be recognized as one of the most significant human resources; it functions in a multitude of ways to affirm contradict, negotiate, challenge, transform, and empower particular cultural and ideological beliefs and practices. ...Language is essential to the process of dialogue, to the development of meaning, and to the production of knowledge. It must be respected in order to make learning meaningful and lifelong. (p. 65)

Adapting to the Canadian Education System

The desire to have their children receive an education is a consistent theme running through the conversations I had with refugee parents. Afghan mothers declare.

> *We hope for education for our children so they can serve Canada, so they can become positive members of this society.*
>
> *School is important. We hope they can get good jobs, become teachers, doctors.*

When asked what is most important for the future of her children this Sudanese mother replies.

> *Their education, because with education they can do anything they want to do and they will know everything and they will know what is good to do and what is bad. Education is the key. They can go anywhere and do anything.*

Afghan and Kurdish teenagers speak for themselves.

> *I want to study. My mother married me off too young; I have not reached any of my dreams. I want to realize them here.* (Afghan teen)

> *I want to go on with my education and get a good job to help myself and my family to have a better life.* (Kurdish teen)

This Kurdish mother appeals for a better life for her children than she has.

> *I want a greater sense of learning for my young children, because I do not want my children to be like I am right now, I want a better life for them, better learning, better education, more support from school, when they go to school in the future; a more open-minded school system.*

With respect to the school system in Canada, many refugees have mixed feelings. They are thankful for access to quality public education, but struggle with the perceived lack of moral training provided in schools as this African French speaking father indicates.

> *The only thing children get from education here is knowledge but not good behaviour or respect.*

Parents want to be supportive of their children's educational experiences, but find the system here different from what they are familiar with.

> *The difference between educations here and there is back home if children do not do well they have to repeat a grade until they do well. Here they put children in the class with the children the same age even if they do not know the English alphabet. The children are given assignments and the parents are expected to help even if they are not educated. They do not know English and they are asked to help children with their homework. Then if children do not do well in school the parents are blamed which is not their fault. Some parents also even if they are educated they do not have time because some of*

> *them are working and they have to go to school in the evenings, so they do not have time. The parents are not able to help but the school blames them if the children do not do well.* (Sudanese mother)

As a result, what do refugee parents do to help themselves navigate this changing field? Key to helping refugee families gain access to a full and healthy life in their new location is supporting them to see their children successfully engaged in culturally appropriate educational activities. The issue becomes whether or not refugee families are able to gain equitable access to education for their children. In assessing the access refugee preschoolers have to early-years care in the United Kingdom, Rutter (1998) concludes, "Refugee children in the UK do not have equal access to early years provision, even though their need may be greater than that of the population as a whole" (p. 23). Two reasons identified why refugee families may have a greater need for early years care than the general population are the lack of informal support (extended family), and school readiness.

While being in greater need, refugee families are among the least likely to receive preschool support. Causes for this lack of access to preschool settings include, (a) meagre finances as a result of insufficient government assistance or the inability to secure suitable jobs, (b) high mobility due to the inadequacy of housing, (c) a lack of information regarding existing preschool services, (d) unwillingness to place children in the care of people they do not know and who do not speak their home language, and (e) the high cost of services including transportation to get the children to the preschool setting (Rutter, 1998, p. 25).

Information gathered during an interview with a Congolese mother illustrates the difficulty refugees have accessing preschool care. In the case of this single mother, rebel factions forcefully separated her and her children from her husband while in a refugee camp. Now relocated to Edmonton with her five children, she experiences great difficulty making sure her school age child safely gets on the school bus before trundling the other four children off with her on public transit to two different preschool settings in hopes of arriving to her English as an additional language class before she is penalized for being late.

Rutter (1998) provides several recommendations to help secure refugee families the right to preschool childcare and education. In summary, they are as follows: (a) Local social service authorities with responsibility for coordinating refugee settlement assigning an individual whose specific responsibility is the resettlement of preschool age refugee children, (b) early childhood home visitation programs being available for highly mobile refugee families, (c) ongoing communication, between social service agencies and local communities where refugees are located, regarding early years programming, (d) knowledge of these services translated into the languages of the community residents, (e) better monitoring and awareness of the ethnic diversity present in communities, (f) refugee communities given the support to establish preschool programs, (g) refugees specifically targeted for vocational training in early years care, (h) bilingual staff hired to work in preschool settings, (i) integrated settings becoming the priority of government financial assistance, (j) play therapy available in early care settings to address the mental health of refugee preschoolers, (k) care providers being proactive in dealing with issues of racism, and (l) training and information relevant to supporting refugee families with preschool children provided to social service personnel.

While I support the suggestions made by Rutter (1998), and I believe the situation in Canada mirrors that of the UK, I also think there are other considerations. Specifically, what are the childrearing practices and mediation strategies utilized in the home context that influence the learning of preschool children? Early childhood services provided in Canada are motivated and mobilized to support families in the acquisition of the "school readiness" skills deemed to be of significance according to the "developmentally appropriate practice learning through play model." What about the ways indigenous to the cultures represented by refugee families that are used to guide and mediate the learning of preschool children? What is required is research that brings these practices to light so dialogue about what is best for refugee children can begin.

Education is about more than academics in the minds of most refugee parents. To have a well-educated child is to have a respectful child. This however is not what refugee parents perceive as the emphasis in Canadian schooling. They feel the education system in Canada does not promote respect as a value to aspire to. What does this mean for parents when they believe the institution that has enormous influence upon their children does not hold the same values they do? If it is perceived that schools and preschools are promoting values in opposition to the values of home, how do parents deal with this? What strategies do parents use to maintain the high value placed on respect? This is one of the issues addressed in the data analysis of the Phase 2 research.

The Future

When asked about the future, parents predictably turn to thinking about the well being of their children as demonstrated by this Afghan mother's words.

> *I hope my children can do well because this is why we came to Canada.*

A Somali mother holds these hopes for her children.

> *My children, I am hoping they are healthy, healthy growing up and to be successful in life and to help us. The best thing I want for them is for them to grow up with good manners. If they have good manners, then they are successful.*

A Kurdish mother asks this for her children.

> *We need more money and more support and free good activities like soccer and hockey; it is so expensive.*

A Cambodian mother expresses these fears about the future.

> *We are scared about the children going out and getting into drugs. My children are still young and already I am worried about them. I hope to protect my children from getting into trouble with drugs and smoking.*

This same mother expresses conflicted feelings about the future of her children.

> *I hope she will have a better future than the people back home. I do not want my child to be like the Canadian children, so I will need to support her more.*

An Eritrean mother expresses uncertainty regarding the future of her preschool son.

> *I see many problems right now. I have a young child, two years old, and I do not know what the future will be for him. We do not know if we are going to get playschool for them. It is hard for us now to get a day care because day care is very expensive, about $500.00. People are struggling.*

Another Eritrean mother anguishes over the future of one of her children.

> *For the future of my children, I think this is the best life for my children for school, for everything; but for the feelings and for the support for my daughter it is better to be with your family, but for the school and medication and to live in Canada for her life it is better, but not mentally. I am not worried about the middle one or the youngest, but the oldest one I worry a lot about her.*

Refugee parents live in the tension between hope and reality. They have high expectations for the futures of their children, especially with respect to education. They are very appreciative of the safety and opportunity afforded to them by resettlement in Canada, but they also have many unmet concerns. How wide is the gap between the dream and the reality of a new and better life? After leaving behind their familiar way of life, living in limbo, and perhaps having experienced great trauma, now in Canada, post-migration or resettlement brings an additional set of challenges. Arriving with high hopes and aspirations, most times refugee families face a very difficult reality.

Summary

As focus group and interview participants pointed out, refugees experience many barriers. Coupled with the emotional and physical burden accumulated in the trans-migration phase, during resettlement the lack of extended family and informal community support, pressures concerning family members still in the home country, financial and job related stress, dealing with the negative opinions Canadians hold about refugees, open racism and discrimination, inadequate housing, and the general unpreparedness to deal with the Canadian way of life, beset all refugees as they attempt to resettle in Canada.

Refugees who are parents are burdened with an additional layer of stress. Being alone during and following childbirth, the perceived discrepancy that exists between indigenous parenting practices and those espoused in Canada, wariness about authorities and governmental intervention, changing roles and family dynamics, children feeling pressured to conform to Canadian values and ways of being in the world, unfamiliarity with the Canadian education system, lack of access to preschool care and education, a desire to retain home language and culture, and support for their children when they are subjected to racism and discrimination, all are issues refugee parents meet.

Phase 1 of this research reveals the context in which refugee families in Edmonton are parenting their preschool children. Phase 2 seeks to inform the field of early childhood education about the way refugee families with preschool children guide and mediate the learning experiences of their children as they encounter the challenges discussed above. The ways and means of refugee parents are juxtaposed with the mediation strategies of developmentally appropriate early childhood practice.

Chapter 6 - Phase 2: Guiding and Mediating the Learning of Preschool Sudanese Children

wooden bricks

The Community of Practice Lens

As human beings, we dwell in "communities of practice" (Wenger 1998) and it is here that we develop our ways of being in the world. Our actions are formed, our identities shaped, we derive meaning for our lives, and we feel a sense of belonging in and through communities of practice.

Refugees spoke during focus groups and interviews conducted in the first phase of this study about life "back home" before the crisis of war and displacement. They describe communities of practice characterized by close familial and community bonds where there was support for dealing with the stress and worries of everyday life, and there were reasonably few concerns about providing life's necessities. There were agreed upon norms for child rearing and education, and a sense of security regarding the roles and responsibilities of family members. This relative homogeneity of culture, language, and ethnicity made for consistency with respect to the purpose and value of daily life. The crisis of war and displacement ended all that. Now having been forcefully removed from their familiar communities of practice and transplanted into foreign ones; what effect does this sudden disruption have upon refugee families with preschool children? Phase 1 of this research mapped the settlement issues refugee families encounter when entering the vast overarching community of practice that might be called, "Canadian culture." Phase 2 explores this encounter within the early childhood care and education community of practice.

The research participants selected for Phase 2, all are members of the community of practice of the settlement agency chosen as the research site. Furthermore, they are members of the smaller community of practice within the agency that concerns itself with the care and education of preschool children; it is this smaller community of practice that is the particular focus of Phase 2. Leading to the data analysis and discussion, I paint a general picture of the overall settlement agency community of practice, as well as the early childhood care and education community of practice within the settlement agency.

The Settlement Agency Community of Practice

The settlement agency serving as the research site is one of seven such agencies supporting refugees and immigrants in Edmonton. The agency offers a full range of settlement support – classes for English language learners (ELL), transitional housing, education brokering, community development, employment programs, and counselling. While many members of the staff are bicultural and multilingual and have experienced the process of adjustment that clients to the centre are experiencing, so too are many staff members Canadian born. What draws all members together is people's "mutual engagement" in a "joint enterprise" by means of a "shared repertoire of actions" (Wenger, 1998). Everyone, the receptionist who answers the telephone, ELL teachers, early childhood educators, employment councillors, the executive director; all are engaged in supporting refugees and immigrants to become full participants in all aspects of life in their new location.

The agency has a long history, and "generational encounters" between "old timers" and "newcomers" to the agency are many and various. While there are staff members who have been with the agency since its inception, continually there are also new employees joining the community of practice as the work of the agency evolves. The agency also provides many volunteer service opportunities for community members and field placements for students from academic institutions in the city. This continuous influx of people facilitates the movement of new ideas into the agency. In community of practice terms, this movement of people across the "boundaries" of the community of practice creates a "nexus of perspectives."

It is when old timers and newcomers to the agency meet and create a "nexus of memberships" that the "dimensions of design" of the community of practice are forged. With respect to one of the dimensions of design, "reification and participation," because of the steady influx of staff, volunteers, and clients to the agency, establishing reified elements can be a challenge. One humorous example from my own experience was when the agency accounting assistant came to me enquiring how many passengers had been in the agency van on an occasion when I had used it two months previous. Apparently, I had forgotten to record that reified statistic in my move to participate!

"Holistic integrated practice" is a hallmark of the agency. This means recognizing that clients coming to access services may present with a specific issue; presenting issues though are most times complexly seated in a multitude of factors. The agency seeks to serve clients in the complexity of their continuously changing wholeness. People are whole people with whole lives; they are much more than simply people who cannot speak English. The services and programs offered strive to reflect this complexity; staff members try to be responsive to needs, and seek to enhance the competencies strengths and capabilities people possess.

The Settlement Agency Early Childhood Community of Practice

Early learning and care has a long association with the settlement agency serving as the research site for Phase 2 of this study. Childminding services have for many years been offered to preschool children whose parents are attending federal government sponsored Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes at the agency. The profile of the early childhood community of practice has however been greatly heightened in recent years. The advent of new staff and a renovated facility has led to an increased sense of "identity" amongst those associated with early learning and care at the agency.

The Parenting and Family Literacy Program offered at the agency provides an opportunity for a "nexus" to form between the early childhood education community of practice and the English language learning community of practice within the agency. With preschool children standing as the "boundary objects," staff members who traditionally have not shared a specific common venture have "engaged," "imagined," and "aligned" themselves.

The goal and purpose of the Parenting and Family Literacy Program is to help refugee and immigrant families with preschool children gain a sense of community, increase their English language skills, learn ways to promote the language and literacy of their children, and gain skills and confidence in parenting their preschool children in this new cultural context. The program is continually evolving. What began as a one afternoon a week program for a handful of parents has now become four afternoons of programming at the settlement agency, with two additional satellite programs offered off site.

Early childhood educators and English as an additional language teachers involved in the Parenting and Family Literacy Program envision their collaborative work as grounded in five foundational principles; sustaining hope and seeking justice, acknowledging sociocultural-historical learning, moving towards interculturalism, building communities of practice, and creating holistic integrated opportunities. While most of these principles have already been discussed in this document, hope and interculturalism require some explanation. Hope is a word that can hold very different meanings from person to person. The point is not to agree on a definitive understanding of hope, but rather to be intentional in bringing hope into the midst of the way staff and clients interact. The term interculturalism offers an image of fluidity or movement between and amongst cultures. Staff believe, as a nation of immigrants, Canada ought to be a place where together we co-construct new ways of living in the world that honour our different ways of knowing and being.

The early learning and care centre within the agency constitutes another community of practice. The children's centre shares boundaries with both the Parenting and Family Literacy Program and the overall agency. The children, as has already been stated, are the boundary objects that link the various communities of practice together. If not for the preschool children, there would be no children's centre, and there would be no Parenting and Family Literacy Program.

The philosophy of the children's centre reads in part:

> *Our facility is often the first encounter families new to Canada have with Canadian early learning and care facilities. Our approach is one of co-learners, helping families to learn to integrate into Canadian society at the same time as we learn about their practices and beliefs.*

Given the reified nature of early childhood practice, being co-learners is a formidable goal. With respect to Wenger's four dimensions of design, early childhood practice is heavily weighted in one direction, the status quo. The "local" outweighs the "global," "reification" takes precedence over "participation," the "designed" overrides the "emergent," and "identification" is more important than "negotiability." The goal of this research is to illustrate how the philosophy stated above can be brought to fruition by beginning to reveal the practices and beliefs newcomers hold with respect to preschool care and education, and suggest how an intercultural exchange of ideas will benefit all involved.

The Role of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

It is my contention that early childhood educators in North America are indoctrinated into believing there is "one right way" (Rogoff, 2003) of promoting the learning of preschool children. Developmentally appropriate practice (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), based on Piagetian and Eriksonian stage theories of child development, dominates the discourse of early childhood education. I would further contend that not only within early childhood circles, but also within Canadian culture generally, this belief holds true, there is one right way to promote the learning of preschool children. In community of practice terms (Wenger, 1998), the shared repertoire of actions within the "developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice" is much reified. There is little room for the negotiation of meaning through participation. The question Phase 2 of this research addresses is what happens when "outsiders," in this case refugee parents and children from Sudan, join the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice?

Analyzed in the data are the interactions that took place between three Sudanese mothers and their sons, and between three early childhood educators and these same three Sudanese boys. Great differences are shown between the relations of the Sudanese mothers to their children and the materials, and those of the developmentally appropriate practice influenced early childhood educators.

Persons examining the data through the lens of developmentally appropriate practice might assume, since what appears does not fit with what they are looking for, that there is little or no learning happening in the mother/child interactions. Too often, when newcomers from other cultures enter developmentally appropriate practice early learning and care programs they are judged as deficient and requiring of instruction and modeling about how to best interact with preschool children to promote their learning. "School readiness skills," with "learning through play" as the singular mode of "best practice," is what dominates developmentally appropriate practice. In keeping with the sociocultural-historical theory of human development however, I argue that all social events are learning events. In the case of the Sudanese mothers and children, we simply do not have eyes to see the learning because it is differently arranged. If what we see does not fit the developmentally appropriate practice lens, we tend to miss the inherent learning.

Research Context

Interactions between Sudanese mothers and their preschool sons utilizing wooden building blocks, a common early childhood artefact, are studied to see what learning the children derive. The observations alone to do not provide all the data; interviews conducted with the mothers, knowledge gained through Phase 1 research regarding the settlement issues of refugee families, consultation with cultural brokers and settlement professionals, and experiences gained through immersion in settlement work during the gathering of this data, all serve to illuminate the analysis.

The research participants, both families and staff members, were involved in a Parenting and Family Literacy Program offered at the settlement agency serving as the research site. The program provides an opportunity for families with preschool children to meet two afternoons a week, three hours each time, over a series of ten weeks. After sharing a light lunch, parents, children, and staff gather to share songs and stories from their home cultures. This is typically a boisterous and active time. After the whole group activities, children attend the early learning and care centre at the agency while parents attend classes for English language learners. Research participants took time away from the regularly programmed events of the Parenting and Family Literacy Program to participate in this research.

Backgrounds of the Families

The families involved in Phase 2 of this research are representative of the range of lived experiences of refugee families from Sudan. Below is a brief sketch of each family story. Since the research involved mothers and their sons, the emphasis below is in tracing the child's and the mother's experiences before arriving in Canada as well as their experiences here.

Nyabelung and Keon

Keon was born in a refugee camp in Kenya and came to Edmonton with his parents and infant sister when he was four years old. When this research was conducted, the family had only been in Canada for six months. Keon had recently begun attending, two afternoons a week, the children's centre at the settlement agency where the research was conducted. He is the youngest of the three children involved in the study. He will turn five years old in the fall of his kindergarten year. The family lives in an apartment within walking distance of the agency. Nuer is the language spoken in the home.

Nyabelung, the mother, left her home village in the south of Sudan as a young girl in 1999. She and her younger and older sisters made their way to a refugee camp in northern Kenya. It is there that she met her husband and where Keon and his younger sister were born. Nyabelung does not know how old she was when she entered the refugee camp nor how old she is now, and she has never been to school.

In the refugee camp, the United Nations had trained some English speaking camp members to run a daycare and school for the children. Children weaned from their mothers would attend the daycare program. Here the children were provided with a minimal amount of "Western" style toys. Preparation for schooling in these centres began in the form of children learning the English alphabet as teachers wrote the letters in the dirt. As children learned their letters, they were given cookies as a reward and when they learned the entire alphabet, they were given a book and deemed ready for the "school" program. On occasion, parents were invited to the daycare centre to see and learn about what the children were accomplishing in that setting.

When children were not attending the daycare or school, they played together in and around the camp fashioning "toys" out of mud and scrap materials. Parents were not involved in the children's play. Nyabelung explained that the parental role was one of nurturing, custodial care, and teaching. With respect to teaching, the most vital lesson for children to learn was obedience to and respect for their parents and elders. The second life lesson taught was to not cause harm to another person. The third teaching emphasis was on ensuring that children maintain their home language amidst the many languages being spoken by people from Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan all living in close proximity in the refugee camp. The method for teaching these lessons was through verbal instruction. Children were expected to heed the words of their parents. If children were disobedient, corporal punishment was used as discipline.

Nyalah and Razi

Razi, the second child involved in the study was born in Cairo, Egypt and came to Edmonton two and a half years ago when he was 2 years old. He turned five years of age at the time of the research.

As a young married couple, Razi's parents had left south Sudan to live in the northern capital city of Khartoum where their first two children were born. When life in Khartoum became difficult, the family fled to a refugee camp in Ethiopia before making their way to Cairo and finally Edmonton. Both parents attended elementary school in Sudan and speak Arabic, the language of schooling in Sudan, as well as Dinka, the language spoken in the home. Nyalah, the mother, was pregnant with her fourth child at the time of the research study.

A year prior to this research, Nyalah had been enrolled in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program at the settlement agency. Here Razi attended the early learning and care centre run by the settlement agency. After a few months Nyalah had to withdraw from LINC classes when the family moved from one subsidized housing complex to another and the transportation arrangements to the agency did not allow her and Razi to attend.

At the time of the research the family had experienced their third move since coming to Edmonton, and Razi was once again attending the early learning and care centre at the agency while Nyalah was attending LINC classes at the literacy level, as well as the Parenting and Family Literacy Program. The arrangements for Nyalah and Razi to attend the agency ended shortly after this research was completed when the due date for the new baby came near. In the fall, Razi will attend kindergarten in the same school as his siblings.

Nyakesha and Chata

Chata, the third child involved in the study came to Canada as an infant after being born in a refugee camp in Ethiopia. He turned five years of age at the time of the research.

Chata's parents had left South Sudan and entered the refugee camp in 2000. Chata has a younger sibling who the family was forced to leave in Africa. At the time when Chata and his parents were granted refugee status, Nyakesha, the mother, did not know she was pregnant. Though born before leaving Africa, the child was not listed on the refugee application and was therefore not allowed to enter Canada with them. The family has now been in Canada for four years and the process is under way to have the child reunited with the parents and siblings here in Canada. There are also two other children born since coming to Canada.

When asked about growing up in Sudan, Nyakesha and her husband spoke fondly of playing with other children by fashioning play things out of mud. The girls made "babies" and all the associated accessories including houses with fences and all the accompanying furniture, while the boys fashioned cows and all the things necessary for farm life. This childhood play along with observing and learning from older siblings is credited with helping them learn to be parents. When asked what was most difficult about life before coming to Canada, Nyakesha replied, "Not having enough to eat." She laments that in Canada now there is plenty to eat, but no family to help her raise her children.

Backgrounds of the Early Childhood Educators

Three early childhood educators, two immigrants, and one a refugee to Canada, participated in Phase 2 of this research. Provided here is a brief sketch of their backgrounds before coming to Canada as well as their thoughts regarding the roles and responsibilities they hold for themselves as early childhood educators.

Hannah

Hannah, originally from Sudan, arrived in Canada with her husband and infant son three years ago. They now have a second son and Hannah was pregnant with her third child during the time of the research. Her home language is Blanda; she also speaks Arabic and some Dinka. Hannah was born and raised in a small city in South Sudan where she attended a "Convent School" run by the Italian Catholic Church. She left Sudan as a teenager and lived in Syria with her older sister and brother-in-law; who was studying to be a veterinarian. The man she was promised to in marriage left Sudan for Egypt where he applied for refugee status on behalf of them both. After settling in Edmonton, Hannah attended English classes and completed the Day Care Orientation Course, the minimum requirement for all staff employed in early learning and care facilities in the province.

When asked about what is important to her in raising her own children, Hannah replied, "*I want them to grow in good living*." She then spoke at length about the problems newcomer families have in Canada when their children do not listen to their parents and use the threat of calling "911" when there are verbal arguments or the use of corporal punishment in the home. Towards the end of this lengthy discourse, she acknowledged that there is some good in the Canadian system of child guidance.

> *Some program here in Canada, I like it, yeah I really, really like it. We go in back home it's different. When the kids do something in the schools they're punished there. But they don't talk to them, but here in, because when they punish them they can put in their mind they can't do this again, because when I did this, or I did something wrong they can punish me. But here in Canada it's different, they just guide the kids and they talk, you know, it's a good thing. It's very, very, I like that way.*

Later in the interview, the importance of religion, God, and prayer as forms of influence on children's behaviour entered the conversation, "*God tell you, you can't do that, you have to do this. He just put in his mind, we can't do, he can't hit his brother, you can't swear to someone.*" Hannah spoke about such religious influences as having a place in the home as well as in school and daycare settings.

When asked what was central to her in her work with preschool children, Hannah spoke about teaching by example, not talking too much, and letting the children follow their own interests. If children are involved with materials that are not safe for them, these materials are to be removed and more suitable objects provided. Hannah said these were things she had observed her older sister doing with her nephew. She also spoke about how giving young children opportunities to do activities such as colouring allowed for the development of fine motor skills and made it possible for adults to observe how a child was progressing in their motor and cognitive skills; "*So you see that physically, everything is working, and you can see that their mind is working.*"

In conclusion, Hannah spoke about the importance of being "friendly" with children.

> *When you are very friendly with your kids you can get a lot from them. They can get a lot from you, because if they get in trouble, if you are so close you talk everything together.*

Hannah feels this friendliness has been extended to her as well, from her co-workers in the centre where she is able to talk about some issues she is experiencing with her own children.

Cheri

Cheri, originally from the Caribbean, came to Canada as a nanny when she first finished high school. Following her years as a nanny, she began working in a daycare at which time she took courses in early childhood education. After taking a break from classes, at the time of the research, Cheri was back at school attending evening courses and was close to completing the first year of a two-year diploma program.

When asked what attracted her to the field of early childhood, Cheri responded, "*Well I love kids, I always do, even since I was a little girl growing up I always wanted to be a mommy, always wanted to look after kids.*" She added that she hopes to be a "*good role model*" to the children she works with. When asked to define what a good role model is the following response was provided.

> *I want to be a good role model so they can learn just being safe and comfortable and being fair to other kids. For example, like two children playing with a toy and there is another one that comes over and wants to take their toy away from the other child. I encourage them to share the toy with each other. It is all about sharing, being cooperative with each other.*

When asked at what age she believes children are capable of learning to share, Cheri replied, "*From the time they look at you and see the expression in your face, so I don't really think there is an age. But maybe from the very young.*" An emphasis on facial expressions and seeing that children are happy was a reoccurring theme in the interview.

When asked about her role in helping preschool children get ready for school, Cheri emphasized self-help skills like being able to use the toilet on your own, tying your shoes, and zipping up your own jacket. Being able to do some puzzles and maybe knowing the letters of your name were also mentioned. Cheri gave the following response when asked to relay what she felt was most important for children to know before beginning school.

> *Well to know their name, know who they are, their parents, maybe their parents name, their name, know a little bit about themselves, like maybe their telephone number, a few things like that.*

She feels it is necessary for children to know this information in order to be able to report it to a helping adult if they find themselves in an unsafe situation. I questioned Cheri on the cultural nature of this safety emphasis. She is aware that this is an expectation that she brings with her from her childhood in the Caribbean.

> *When I was growing up we used to walk to school and there was always two or three of us and our parents when school was finished we were in a different class or grade, whichever you want to call it and we had to wait outside for each other and we all walked home together. They never wanted us to come home by ourselves so safety was always something, and I always instil that.*

In closing, Cheri spoke about her affinity with the refugee families she works with.

> *I kind of put myself in their situation because I look at myself as an immigrant. I know how different it was when I first got here. I kind of feel like I'm one with them sometimes, so when the kids come and they're crying because they are maybe scared or upset, because they're missing mama, I try to make them feel comfortable and safe. I kind of fit in.*

She wants families to know that there is always someone here for them to talk with and that their children are safe.

Bonita

Bonita immigrated to Canada from South America, 30 years ago, with her husband, and two young children. She completed her diploma is Early Childhood Development after both her children were in school. She is the team member at the settlement agency early learning and care centre with the most experience and education. When asked to reflect on her wishes for her own children when they were preschool age and new to Canada, her focus was on social and political freedom.

> *I was hoping for a place where there was freedom, where everybody was accepted for how you are, who you are. That we were able to say what we thought and we were not scared to say what we were thinking.*

After one year in Canada, the family journeyed back to South America to visit. It was at this time they became certain Canada would be their new home. She says of this decision, "*I think we couldn't choose a better place, it's the best place, the best decision that we have done.*"

While embracing their adopted country, Bonita and her husband also wanted their children to learn to speak Spanish and to learn about their culture and their "roots." When asked what it means to maintain cultural roots, Bonita responded, "*Language, food, songs, traditional festivals, even traditional ways of doing things.*" The example she gave was of cooking traditional foods in clay pottery she has brought from South America. Such things Bonita believes are important for all children so they grow up knowing "*where they come from and they are okay.*"

When asked about her work as an early childhood educator and what she wants young children to learn, Bonita listed learning to socialize, becoming independent, and acquiring knowledge and skills. In her work with refugee families, she appreciates the importance of maintaining home language and culture while at the same time she encourages families to "*see what we are doing here in Canada.*" With respect to school readiness, Bonita emphasizes independence, "*When we're helping a child speak up for themselves or when we're helping a child to say what they want, what they need, we're getting a child ready to go to school.*"

When asked for her opinion on what in particular refugee children and families need to learn, she continues highlighting independence, "*Getting your child to do things by themselves is a big issue for parents from other cultures.*" Speaking from her own experience as a newly immigrated young parent, she shared this recollection.

> *I come from a culture where we do things for children until children go to school. We dress up our children, we feed our children, we comb their hair, and we do everything for children. But when I came here to Canada, and I saw how important it was, and I saw my neighbours, for example, having chores for those two and a half and three year olds at home I said yes, it has to be that way, and then I saw yeah it's not that your helping me do my work, I saw the independence coming behind all that. I'm helping you to be responsible; I'm helping you to be independent.*

With this feeling of independence, Bonita believes a child's self esteem is strengthened.

> *How important it is for a child to, to be proud of all that a child does, and proud of that little picture or proud of that messy picture or proud of the tower that they built, and feel good about what they're doing.*

At the same time she believes children need freedom to make mistakes, to not do well and still feel good about who they are. At times, she deliberately makes mistakes in front of the children "*so they can see that its okay to make mistakes for adults, that adults do make mistakes*."

In closing, when I asked Bonita if there was anything else she wanted me to know, she spoke about valuing the diversity of each child.

> *With all my years of working with children, I learned that children do things different. Yeah they always learn how to read and write when they're a certain age, but they will do it at their way of learning and their kind of learning. It's like when a child learns to walk and the child learns to take a spoon and eat, feed by themselves. They will all do it in different ways and they all do it at their own time.*

Bonita believes this knowledge about diversity is particularly relevant in working with families from many cultural and linguistic backgrounds,

> *Because at home they have one learning, at school and at the centre they will have the Canadian way of learning. So, it might take longer for them to learn where we want them to go, but they will do it in their time and in their own way of learning.*

Summary

Six adults, and three preschool age children served as participants in Phase 2 of this research. I feel tremendous gratitude for the willingness and enthusiasm they each brought to the endeavour. The three early childhood educators, two who are immigrants, and one a refugee to Canada, each bring a distinctive approach. The sociocultural-historical circumstances of their individual lives, as this relates to the interactions with the Sudanese refugee children, are explored in the following data analysis and discussion. How developmentally appropriate practice is evidenced in these interactions, and indications of strategies used to guide and mediate the learning of the three Sudanese preschool children are given particular focus.

I feel inadequate to the task of bringing forth the richness of the data provided by the three Sudanese refugee mothers who participated in this research. Any limitations in what I am able to reveal in the data analysis and discussion is in no way a reflection of their contributions, but is entirely limited by my own inadequacy to perceive and portray what was evidenced. Though sharing a common ethnicity, and a common designation as refugees, they each bring the depth of their individual sociocultural and historical conditions to the research. Furthermore, the individuality of their present circumstances, with each of them having differing resettlement experiences, adds to the significance of the data. The progression of from six months to nearly four years as residents of Canada and the resulting exposure to "Western" ways of parenting, in particular, developmentally appropriate early childhood practice and evidence of such influences upon the way the learning of their children is guided and mediated, is a particular focus of the data analysis and discussion.

Research Space and Materials

The video data collection was conducted in a space dedicated to this purpose. It contained the audio and videotaping equipment, the set of wooden building blocks and a rectangular child-size table and two child-size chairs. The table was covered with a tablecloth thin enough to allow for stability when building while at the same time providing cushioning for noise reduction. The two chairs were set beside each other along one of the long sides of the table; this situated the adult and child as sitting beside each other. The blocks were at one of the short sides of the table, made to be spilling out of the box in which they were stored. The blocks therefore were more accessible to one of the participants than the other.

Nyabelung and Keon

Nyabelung and Keon were very new to Canada at the time of this research. They had arrived in Edmonton six months before the data collection. Though not knowing her age, Nyabelung is undoubtedly a very young mother. She entered a refugee camp as a young girl in 1999 and is now the mother of Keon, age 4, and an infant. She has never been to school and does not read or write. She speaks only Nuer. Keon, Nyabelung, and the newborn were participants in the Parenting and Family Literacy Program offered at the settlement agency serving as the host site for this research. The agency provides transportation to and from the program for families needing this service. Only on their first visit did Nyabelung and the children utilize the agency provided transportation. On all subsequent visits, they walked to the agency.

I would characterize Keon as a very happy and active 4 year-old. When I picture him in my mind, he is smiling. Nyabelung, like most Nuer people, is very tall by Western standards. Like Keon, she is outgoing and energetic. On her first visit to the agency program Nyabelung was very excited upon discovering others there who she had known in the refugee camp in Kenya. The atmosphere was one of a reunion of family and friends. As Nyabelung continued to attend the program, she became a key participant in the sharing of music from her home culture and was always eager to dance.

Nyabelung has no experience with the blocks used in the study. Keon has minimally used similar blocks in the agency children's centre, and may have had exposure to block play in the United Nations sponsored daycare in the refugee camp in Kenya. The observation of Nyabelung and Keon with the wooden building blocks offers a glimpse into what can happen when "outsiders" enter the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice.

If looked at from the developmentally appropriate practice position, essentially, Keon is not "allowed" to use the blocks; Nyabelung dominates their use, and chastises Keon when he comes too close or tries to get involved. One gets the sense of an older and younger sibling, with the older dominating the younger.

Later, when viewing the video recording with Nyabelung, I asked her why Keon was not welcomed into sharing the blocks with her. She said it is her job as the parent to teach her child and since she had no experience with these blocks, she needed to learn how to use them first. This is not unlike many Canadian families upon first receiving a new board game or electronic device; the parent will take responsibility to "learn the rules" or "figure the toy out" before leading the children through the steps.

When Nyabelung and Keon enter the room where the data collection is occurring, Nyabelung takes the position closest to the blocks. Keon's attention is drawn first to the recording equipment. I convince him to join his mother at the table. When Keon joins Nyabelung, she says something to him in Nuer and straightens his shirt. In this act, I assume, since they are being video recorded, Nyabelung is concerned that Keon look proper or presentable.

In my experience with Sudanese families, grooming and dress is given much care and attention (perhaps even more so in a public place). In my ongoing involvement at the settlement agency, when it became known that I owned an electric hair trimmer, I was pressed into service cutting some of the children's and the mothers' hair. The Sudanese families eagerly welcome articles of adult and children's clothing donated to the agency. I had one Sudanese woman tell me that since I was her friend I should buy her a new dress.

Nyabelung quickly sets herself to the task of using the blocks while Keon sits, somewhat removed from the table. After a few moments of looking into the video camera, Keon leans forward, places his elbows on the table, and reaches towards the blocks Nyabelung has positioned vertically in front of her. While saying something, without looking at Keon, Nyabelung flicks her wrist against the hand Keon has placed very close to the blocks. Keon then says something to Nyabelung as he reaches across her. Nyabelung raises her arm and brushes Keon's outstretched arm away. Keon withdraws his arm, smiles, and laughs, sits back down on his chair, and returns to smiling into the video camera.

This pattern of Keon trying to become involved in using the blocks and Nyabelung preventing him reoccurs throughout the session. Twice Nyabelung brushes Keon's hand away, once she removes from his hand a block he has picked up, three times she verbally prevents his involvement, once she "wags" her finger at him in warning, once she shakes her head.

In spite of what might appear like a long list of preventative interventions, Keon for the most part seems very willing to comply with his mother's insistence that he not get involved. When he is present at the table, his hands are usually folded resting in front of him. Three times, he reaches to touch the block structure Nyabelung has made, and then of his own accord withdraws his hand. On two occasions, he seems to find it humorous that his mother is preventing his involvement. I get the feeling that he and I are sharing some kind of joke as he tries to provoke his mother before he retreats, shrugs, and shares a smile with the video camera (or me). I wonder if the minimal experiences Keon has with developmentally appropriate practice expectations regarding the use of wooden building blocks have already shown him that he is the one who "should" have central use of the materials, not his mother. Still, the feeling one gets in watching Keon is that he is simply waiting while his mother partakes in this activity.

In my experience with Sudanese families, an adult being involved in a particular activity while children wait is a familiar pattern. On one occasion during the Parenting and Family Literacy Program sharing of cultural music after lunch, the Sudanese mothers became very involved in dancing together. One of the four-year-old children (a participant in this research study) lined up child-size chairs along the side of the room where the mothers were dancing so that he and all the younger children could sit and watch. On many occasions, I have been reminded of this expectation when I have assumed that the children required some special attention because the parents were engaged with a task, when in fact the children were content to simply wait. For example, when there has been a critical situation that requires a family to be present at a medical facility with one of their children, my assumption has been that the other children in the family ought to be brought to the agency because certainly they will find it difficult to endure the long wait such events entail. However, this is not the case. The children pose no disruption and are content until the situation is resolved and they are able to return home.

Consistently, when Sudanese parents are engaged in a task, the children simply wait. This I believe is a culturally learned pattern that begins in infancy. Infants under six months of age accompany their mothers to the English classes associated with the Parenting and Family Literacy Program. These infants require very little care and attention; they simply wait, watch, and listen to the events around them from their location in their infant seats on the floor beside their mothers. There is some evidence here that the belief that children have short attention spans and therefore are to be given special consideration at all times might be a culturally learned phenomenon.

Since Nyabelung has no previous experience with wooden building blocks, it is interesting to note how she approaches the use of the materials and how she progresses in their use. She immediately shows a preference for "tall" blocks. She chooses to use the neutral arch and red cylinder that are standing vertically in front of her, but not the green cube. While in the process of gaining Nyabelung's consent to participate in the research, another Sudanese mother demonstrated what she believed I was asking of research participants by taking the blocks I had available and standing several vertically in a row saying, "Darcey wants you to build a house, like this."

Whether influenced by this mother's example, or whether this style of building with vertically placed blocks is natural to Nyabelung, is difficult to know. I do however find it interesting to note the pattern of vertical construction rather than horizontally stacked blocks. It is a very common procedure within the early childhood community of practice to evaluate the fine motor ability of a child by assessing how many blocks she or he can stack one on top of the other. If, as we see here, a child's use of wooden building blocks is mediated in such a way that the stacking upward is not emphasized then likely such a child will not perform well in the task of stacking. This will likely be taken as an indication of poor fine motor skills, when in fact this may not be the case. The child's fine motor skills are likely not deficient, but rather differently manifested.

Having set the neutral pillar and red cylinder vertically in a row, Nyabelung then adds from the pile of blocks a red rectangle and a red pillar that she places vertically alongside the first two blocks. She then removes the neutral pillar and red cylinder from the line of blocks and seeks from the pile a tall rectangle. When in her selecting she brings an orange rectangle alongside a red one, she decides to return the orange block to the pile and set her task at selecting only red blocks. The next red block she selects is a cube. In setting the cube in place, she has now created a pattern of alternating short and tall square-sided red blocks.

With a row of five vertical blocks of varying heights before her, Nyabelung attempts to place the earlier discarded neutral arch on top of two tall blocks at the end of the row. She realizes there is a discrepancy in height between the two blocks and that the arch will not balance on top. She adds another red block to the row then shifts the arch to try placing it on top of two other blocks. These blocks are the same height and the arch balances on top of them, but with little support.

It is interesting to note this trial and error approach. It was not visually obvious to Nyabelung that the arch would not balance on top of the row; she had to physically try. She is quick to note though that the balance is precarious and moves to reinforce the structure by taking the yellow rectangle she had earlier removed from Keon's hand and lifting up the arch, places it horizontally across the two vertical blocks before replacing the arch. She then makes a second row of vertical blocks paralleling the first row, and places blocks horizontally between the tops of the two vertical lines of blocks. She has created a structure that can be described as two "walls" and a "roof."

With much determination, several times, Nyabelung repeats this pattern of building structures with vertically positioned blocks used as walls and horizontally placed blocks spanning the distance between the walls to form a roof. Three times, one of the structures is knocked over, and continually she perseveres and rebuilds. In all honesty, I was amazed by her tenacity and was reluctant to end the session because I was curious to see how long she would continue the building and rebuilding, with no obvious sign of frustration.

Two things I wish to discuss at this point, one being the trial and error approach that quickly resulted in an effective strategy for building what Nyabelung later told me was a "Sudanese house." Though not having any direct experience using wooden building blocks, it would seem Nyabelung was able to transfer skills acquired in a previous community of practice to the task before her. In a short time, Nyabelung had progressed to be a competent user of the blocks. It would have been interesting to stage a series of observations to see how this knowledge acquisition would affect how she and Keon interacted in subsequent opportunities to use the blocks together.

It is often assumed that a lack of access to play materials places a person at a loss. Though Nyabelung did not grow up using wooden building blocks, there undoubtedly were other opportunities where she developed skills that she was able to transfer to this context. This example of using wooden building blocks might seem trivial, but I believe the underlying premise is important. Too often in the early childhood community of practice, it is assumed that families from "disadvantaged circumstances," of which refugee families would be characterized, are unskilled or incompetent. This is not the case. We are required to step down from our position as harbourers of all knowledge and skill worth having, and become open to seeing what knowledge and skills newcomers bring. In community of practice terms, developmentally appropriate practice has to be less "local" and more "global."

I wish also to address Nyabelung's persistence and perseverance in using the wooden building blocks. No doubt, there are many reasons why this was the posture she brought to the task, personality, life experiences, a desire to please; however, I choose to look at this aspect in relation to what refugee parents revealed in Phase 1 of this research, and what Nyabelung herself said. "It is my job to teach my son, so I have to learn how to use the blocks first." Refugee parents want their children to succeed, to be happy, and live well in Canada. "I want my children to be better than me. I want them to do well at school." These are common refrains among refugee parents.

I sensed determination in Nyabelung's actions. This was something of great importance, something she needed to master. Early childhood educators, and educators of all descriptions are all too often quick to condemn newcomer parents because they are not performing with their children the tasks that we consider essential. We speak disparagingly about the parent who is not able to offer the cognitive stimulation that most Canadian born parents are able to provide. This does not mean that the parent does not care deeply about their child and it does not mean that the parent is not providing for the cognitive development of the child.

If Nyabelung was able to bring such purpose and resolve to this unfamiliar task, what measure of purpose and resolve does she bring to tasks considered essential to the well being of children within her more familiar communities of practice? Many times, I hear it said, "Oh, those poor children, their parents don't play with them, and they hardly have any toys in the house." It cannot be automatically assumed that such children are lacking. They may not be at a loss; we may be the lesser because we lack the eyes to see the riches that are present in their lives.

Nyalah and Razi

If in observing Nyabelung and Keon the feeling is of watching an older and younger sibling, in the case of Nyalah and Razi, the feeling is one of watching "soul mates." Here again I was reluctant to end the session, this time because I was so taken aback by the deep feeling of connection between mother and son. Later in watching the video recording, I was surprised that they were not physically touching, for that was the feeling that came across, one of being physically connected. The most startling aspect is that this sense of union was communicated with barely a word spoken.

Of the three families participating in the research, though we do not know her age, Nyalah appears to be the eldest of the three mothers. She is also the only one to have attended school before leaving Sudan. She speaks Dinka, her "mother tongue," and Sudanese Arabic. Originally, from a village in South Sudan, Nyalah, her husband, and children have lived in the large cities of Khartoum in northern Sudan and Cairo, Egypt. If I were to characterize her, Nyalah is the most mature and has had the most varied life experiences of the three mothers participating in the Phase 2 research. Razi, I would describe as quiet and thoughtful.

Nyalah sits in the chair closest to the blocks. Once settled into place at the table she sweeps some blocks to within closer reach of Razi. He eagerly accepts the blocks and they both spend a few moments sliding the blocks around on the table while glancing side ways to see what the other is doing. Razi is quicker to start building a definable structure. He continues to glance sideways though to see what Nyalah is doing as he builds.

Like Nyabelung, initially Nyalah physically handles the blocks before knowing how they might be utilized. For example, she manipulates three triangles by sliding them around on the table in front of her. She tries to get two triangles to stack in such a way as to form a cube. When she realizes this is not going to work, she proceeds to select mainly cubes from the pile of blocks to build a long low structure with a wide opening at one end resembling a "horseshoe."

Nyalah is very deliberate in the way she selects and places each of the blocks. Only rectangular blocks, pillars, and cubes are used with the exception of a few triangles that are placed on top of the structure. Blocks that she rejects are slid over to where Razi can reach them. She works with intensity and appears to have something in mind that she wishes to construct. She later tells me that the structure is a "fence." I am also informed that women often contributed to building projects "back home" and that Nyalah's husband was a builder by trade both in Sudan and Egypt.

In Nyalah's building, I wish to note the openness of the construction. This too was noted in the building done by other Sudanese mothers. They do not create closed in structures, the blocks are not the building; the construction actually is a model of something. There is space within the building to accommodate people and furnishings. I do think this is of significance. For a Sudanese person, family and community are central. A fence with a wide opening represents the family compound, a place where all are welcome. This is what Nyalah chose to build, rather than a closed in building. Later in the session, she insists that Razi incorporate this type of openness into his construction. I do believe such subtleties are worth noting. The single-family dwelling, and what it represents, is the normative form of construction in Canadian culture. This stands in stark contrast to the Sudanese compound.

As Nyalah is intently building, twice Razi reaches towards the pile of blocks in front of Nyalah as if to retrieve a block, and then withdraws his hand. My interpretation here is that Razi, like Keon, is giving his mother the respect expected of him as she partakes in this activity. Nyalah is very aware of Razi's need for blocks even though he never asks for any, and she shares only fleeting sideways glances at what he is doing. She periodically sweeps a few blocks within closer reach of Razi and when she selects blocks that do not seem to fit with her construction plans, she moves them closer to within his reach.

I wish to comment on Nyalah having preferential selection of the blocks. Within developmentally appropriate practice, "child centred practice" is the norm. The adult is to follow the child's lead; the adult is to facilitate, guide, and provide the materials necessary to foster learning through play. Block building experiences are undertaken primarily to develop fine motor skills and promote the cognitive development of "the child." This is likely not something Nyalah knows. I have asked them to participate in this activity with very little preliminary input as to how the experience "should" proceed. Working from within her own community of practice experiences, an invitation by me to "Do whatever you would like with the blocks," leads to them building independent structures with the mother getting first choice of the blocks. What I heard repeatedly from participants in the Phase 1 research, and newcomers to Canada generally is that what they value most is their children being respectful. I see in Razi and Keon this value evidenced as they withdraw from interfering in what their mothers are doing. The requirement to respect your parents is further reinforced when Nyalah assumes preferential choice of the blocks.

Razi clearly demonstrates his respect for his mother when near the end of the session Nyalah reaches over to help Razi with his construction. She proceeds to add two lines of blocks in front of the ones he has set down. These begin to resemble the fence structure that she has built. Razi places a block at the end of the two lines his mother has added in an attempt to close off the end of the fence. Nyalah moves the block to open the end. Razi again closes it off. Nyalah opens it. Ultimately, Razi complies and leaves the block as Nyalah has placed it. Clearly, this is how his mother wants it, and so it will be.

It is interesting to note how Razi evolved in his building technique during the session. Having had experiences within the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice, Razi begins his building by stacking blocks one on top of the other to form "tower" structures. As he has trouble with his towers falling over, he begins to use a combination of techniques; he incorporates both vertical height and horizontal length into his building. It is assumed, the influence of Nyalah's way of construction, which he has been continually glancing at out of the corner of his eye, has had an influence.

One final aspect to discuss regarding the interaction between Razi and Nyalah is the lack of verbal interaction. As I said in beginning, there was a deep sense of connection and awareness of what the other was doing even though they did not converse. I describe this as a profound feeling of "being with the other." There was no sense that something needed to be done or accomplished; mother and son were simply content to "be."

Within the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice, "doing" and the acquisition of knowledge and skills is of paramount importance, and language, and literacy are essential ways of both relaying knowledge and determining what knowledge has been acquired. As a result, in early intervention programs, speech and language pathologists are key players; if a child is not talking, this is surely a problem. In my own experience, my son speaking his first three-word sentence was a moment filled with excitement and pride, and is indelibly printed in my memory. Clearly, this is not the case for Nyalah. She feels no compulsion to be filling the air with chatter. They are doing a task, and that task is building; to that they set their attention. One of the early childhood educators participating in the research, in watching the video recording of first Nyalah and Razi and then herself and Razi partaking in the task remarked with great feeling, "I have to stop talking so much!"

Nyakesha and Chata

Of the three families involved in the Phase 2 research, Nyakesha and Chata have lived in Canada the longest, and they are the participating family that has had the most association with the settlement agency. Chata, though born in a refugee camp, has lived here since infancy. Chata was attending a "Head Start" program as well as the settlement agency early learning and care centre at the time of the research. Nyakesha, I would estimate is in her early twenties and has given birth to four children. She is seen to be tired most of the time, and has frequent bouts of ill health. Chata is enthusiastic and inquisitive. If Keon is characterized as happy, and Razi as thoughtful; Chata can be described as bright. He was not yet three years old when one day Nyakesha came to pick him up from the children's centre and he announced, "Just five more minutes mom!"

Nyakesha seats herself at the chair further away from the blocks while Chata spends a few moments investigating the recording equipment in the room. Like Nyabelung, Nyakesha attends to the grooming aspects of both her and Chata at the outset of the session. She adjusts first her headscarf and her jacket before looking to see that Chata's face needs cleaning.

I am intrigued that Nyakesha assumes the chair at the table further from the blocks, consequently; leaving the spot closer to the blocks for Chata to occupy. Was this intentional? Perhaps not, but it did set a precedence. In every subsequent observation of Chata with each of the early childhood educators, he takes up the position closest to the blocks. In observations of the other boys, the adult takes the block position. I had not intended for position at the table to be a factor in this research, it just so happens that this striking difference arose. I now see the block position as the "power position." The person seated closest to the blocks has easier access and can more directly determine how the blocks are used. Without jumping ahead to discuss later observations of Chata, in brief, Chata makes the most of his position of power.

Chata begins using the blocks first. He quickly stacks three cubes one on top of the other then criss-crosses two rectangles on top of the cubes. He contemplates placing a third rectangle on top, then changes his mind and takes the structure down. He proceeds to make a "lever" out of two criss-crossed rectangles that he uses to catapult a cube into the air. While Chata is doing this Nyakesha asks, "Are you making a house?" Chata's response is not clear. In the mean time, the catapulted cube flies into the air and lands on the table. Nyakesha and Chata both smile, laugh, and exchange glances with each other before looking up at the camera (or me). Chata gestures the catapult action several times in quick succession before setting up the catapult a second time. This time the cube is sent flying to the floor. Nyakesha again laughs and looks up at the video camera (or me). It seems, like two children caught in some act of which its acceptability is uncertain; they wonder what kind of reaction their actions solicit.

This opening episode is characteristic of the session. With Keon and Nyabelung described as older and younger siblings during the block building, and Razi and Nyalah as soul mates, Chat and Nyakesha interact as "peers or playmates." The two of them vie for the same blocks, "argue" over what to build, brush each other's arms out of the way as they reach over each other to access the blocks, and each want to perform the same actions. At one point Chata leaves the table to look at Nyakesha through the vantage point of the video camera. After Chata returns to the table, Nyakesha takes a turn to look back at Chata through the camera. As the session progresses, they take up the task of building by following the pictures printed on the side of the box. While Chata is the one who first notices the pictures, and brings them to the attention of his mother, Nyakesha takes hold of the box and places it at her end of the table. In keeping with the playmate analogy, if Chata is going to have preferential access to the blocks, then she is going to keep things fair by having the pictures closer to her.

While Chata retrieves the fallen cube from the floor after completing the catapult episode, Nyakesha reaches over to the pile of blocks to draw a handful of blocks closer to her. Chata takes it upon himself to eagerly spread these blocks out across the table while saying, "Mama, let's make a castle." Nyakesha disagrees, "No let's make a house."

With the box now empty, Chata picks it up and examines the pictures on the side. He makes some suggestions of how the blocks could be used. Nyakesha says, "Oh, I want to see," and reaches for the box. Chata passes Nyakesha the box with the pictures upside down. Nyakesha rotates the box so she can see the pictures upright. Chata reaches for the box, saying, "No, no," while trying to turn the box upside down. Nyakesha keeps a firm hold of the box. While placing her arm between Chata and the box, she places the box down on the table, saying, "Look."

They proceed to form a series of structures that mirror the pictures on the side of the box. At times, they disagree on how the building should proceed. Chata becomes agitated; his voice rises, as he says, "Okay!" or "No, no, no; I want to make this one!" Nyakesha smiles or laughs in response to their disagreements. At one point Nyakesha offers, "Wow!" as she admires her own building results, and once she offers the same response to something Chata has made. As Nyakesha becomes engaged in following the building pattern on the side of the box, she increasingly brushes Chata's arm away when he attempts to add blocks to the structure, and on one of these occasions when he does contribute to the building she tells him, "Wrong way."

Nyakesha and Chata both talk periodically throughout the session and at one point Nyakesha hums as she builds. Here again, the peer analogy fits. There does not seem to be a hierarchy to the discourse, they talk as playmates engaged together in an event. Sometimes one leads the conversation, sometimes the other. The focus however, is not on dialogue, but building.

In contrast to the other two boys, it is interesting to note the seeming lack of respect Chata shows his mother. He repeatedly disagrees, shows frustration, and interrupts what Nyakesha is doing. Nyakesha shows inconsistency in her response to this. At times, she remains firm in what she wants to happen, for example, holding tight to the box and placing it where she wants it on the table. At other times, she laughs in response to Chata's insistence on doing things his way. Nyakesha repeatedly brushes Chata's arm away; as Nyabelung did with Keon, the difference is Chata never gets the message; he continually tries to interrupt his mother. Why such a difference, personality perhaps, or coincidence? I think not. Nyakesha and Chata have had the most exposure to the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice. Nyakesha's opening comment to Chata is to ask him if he is building a house. Framed more as an open ended question, "Chata what are you building?" this becomes something any early childhood educator, including myself, would ask. Looking back to Chata's request for "Five more minutes mom," this is something he has learned within the early childhood community of practice.

Nyakesha appears very much in transition. She displays traits similar to Nyabelung who is very new to Canada, she wants to learn how the blocks work, and she repeatedly brushes Chata away when he interrupts what she is doing. On the other hand, she invites Chata's involvement by asking him questions, and follows his lead when he introduces the pictures on the side of the box. Chata, in having had much exposure to the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice, is very familiar with the materials, he has had more experience with building blocks than his mother, and he, I believe considers himself the expert. Furthermore, child centred practice is something he has come to expect. The experience ought to be "all about him." Whereas the experience with Razi and Nyalah exudes a sense of peacefulness, and the observation of Keon and Nyabelung a sense of purpose and resolve, with Chata and Nyakesha the feeling is one of competition. One system, one way of being, one person's desire is in opposition to the other.

This is my concern: refugee and immigrant parents want their children to respect them, and they have certain expectations regarding how that respect is to be manifested. Newcomer parents are critical of our education system because they feel children are not taught there the values they want their children to hold. In this episode, I see exactly this happening; Chata is not respecting his mother, at least not in the way the other two boys did. While acknowledging there are many factors at work influencing how Chata and Nyakesha interact, I suggest that developmentally appropriate early childhood practice has had a detrimental influence and has contributed to the diminished traditional sense of respect Chata shows his mother.

Summary

We see between the three dyads of Sudanese mothers and sons, some very different dynamics, but also some similarities. While acknowledging that individual personalities and family systems do play a part, my focus is on exploring how the resettlement process, in particular, exposure to the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice influences how the learning of preschool refugee children is mediated.

We see in the progression from Nyabelung and Keon, having been in Canada only six months, to Nyakesha and Chata, who have been here for about four years, the strategies and interaction styles of Nyakesha beginning to mirror that of developmentally appropriate practice. She verbally interacts with Chata, and gives him freedom to explore the materials. We see also however, that Chata has lost the ability to offer his mother the respect that the two other boys give their mothers. Mother and son have been reduced to playmates that compete for the best materials and control of the "playing field."

Nyalah and Razi have affected me deeply. Their ability to dwell alongside one another in the task of building is a joy to watch. There is not the frenetic energy of the newest mother, Nyabelung, struggling to figure out her place in this new community of practice, and there is not the misplaced efforts of Nyakesha, as she begins to incorporate into her repertoire of actions the techniques she has observed modeled and discussed during her many interactions within the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice. Nyalah and Razi are sure of their position. The dimensions within which they relate are clearly understood. There is reciprocity, and a fitness of practice. They know their roles, and Nyalah has clarity about the knowledge and skills she wishes her son to adopt. Their identity as mother and son are clear.

My uneasiness lies in the future for Nyalah and Razi. As he begins kindergarten and gains knowledge and skills within the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice, where will he see greater meaning for his life, home, or school? How will his identity as a Sudanese boy be affected by the transition to the school setting? How will Nyalah and other members of this family adjust to the inevitable changes? Of course, my hope is that the educational institutions Nyalah and Razi enter will see in them something to be treasured and seek to welcome that into their community of practice; however, past experiences tell me this may not be the case.

A key similarity I see between all three scenarios is the focus on the task, building with the blocks. As we turn to examine the guided use of the materials at the direction of three developmentally appropriate practice influenced early childhood educators, a different focus arises.

Hannah and Keon

It is important to note that Hannah, though Sudanese, does not share the same refugee experience as the three mothers involved in the study. She was never a "camp refugee." She grew up in a family with the financial means to send her to a "Convent School" in Sudan and then later to leave the country and live in Syria with her sister and brother-in-law before joining her fiancé in Cairo in preparation for coming to Canada. She knows a few words in the home languages of the children, as well as some Sudanese Arabic, but does not speak Nuer or Dinka fluently. Her home language is Blanda.

As Hannah and Keon approach the research setting, Hannah is heard counting in English, "One, two, three, four." When they first enter the room, Keon goes directly to the video camera, giggles and tries to look through the viewfinder. Using the Nuer word for "come," while tapping the tabletop with the palm of her hand, Hannah encourages Keon to sit at the table. After a few attempts at verbally calling him, Hannah walks over to Keon and taking him by the arm, directs him to the table. She assists him to sit at the chair further away from the blocks.

Now both seated, Keon places on the table a silver car and a red fire truck. I was later told, at the time, vehicles were Keon's favourite play items and he insisted on bringing some with him to the taping. In all subsequent taping sessions, Keon and/or the accompanying adult brought vehicles along. As Keon begins to "drive" the vehicles, Hannah says, "You want to take a picture with the car? Wow! You say one, two, three, four, where that car go?"

Hannah, while making "vehicle noises," begins placing rectangular blocks horizontally on the table in front of where Keon is driving his vehicles. She tries to have Keon count with her as she sets the blocks down. He is focused on the vehicles. She repeatedly calls his name and pulls on his arm and shoulder in an attempt to have him give his attention over to what she is doing with the blocks. Finally, after Hannah says, "Keon, look at me," he turns his body towards her.

Keon brings two of the blocks Hannah has placed on the table in front of him into alignment end-to-end to begin making a "road" for the vehicles. Keon, saying something unintelligible, is perceived by Hannah to be counting. She continues adding blocks to the road, and counting. Any utterance made by Keon in this sequence is interpreted as the vocalization of a number, and Hannah offers much praise each time. They both continue driving and making vehicle noises as they add blocks to the road. At one point Keon begins to slide off his chair. Hannah helps him adjust his position saying, "Good sitting."

Hannah, after helping Keon to sit on the chair, begins dismantling the road. She places a pillar vertically at the centre of the table, saying; "Look here Keon," while touching his arm. When he turns his attention to what she is doing, Hannah asks Keon to place another pillar alongside the one she has set down. The gesture implies that she wants him to begin a row of vertically placed pillars, reminiscent of the vertical construction the Sudanese mothers had done. Keon however, takes one of the pillars and stacks it on top of the one placed by Hannah. He proceeds to stack six pillars one on top of the other. Hannah offers much verbal praise and claps as Keon places each of the blocks. At one point, she refers to the colour of one of the blocks, and remarks using English and Nuer, while gesturing, that the blocks are very "high."

Keon then takes the stack of blocks down two at a time, before once again beginning a road. He proceeds to push the road and one of the vehicles off the table. He giggles as the blocks and vehicle drop to the floor. Hannah claps and laughs with him. He immediately drops to the floor to begin picking them up. Hannah enthusiastically thanks him for doing so. Hannah helps him to return to his chair. While Keon is focused on the vehicle in front of him, Hannah calls his attention to the road she has begun to construct by tapping the blocks with her finger. Keon places his vehicles on top of the road and drives back and forth while Hannah quickly adds more blocks to each end. She mimics the sounds Keon is making as he drives.

Keon says something that Hannah interprets as referring to the length of the road, she gestures with her hands saying, "Ya, it is long," drawing out the word, "long." The road construction continues until the end of the session, with any further vocalizations by Keon interpreted as counting, and Hannah offering praise for each of these attempts.

Hannah and Razi

As soon as Hannah and Razi are seated at the table, with Hannah closest to the blocks, she asks Razi what he wants to make. "A house," he replies. Hannah agrees, and begins selecting blocks from the pile beside her. Razi already has a few assorted blocks in front of him. He slides the blocks around on the table while glancing sideways to watch what Hannah is doing. Hannah places several homogenous blocks on the table to form the base of a three-sided structure. Razi reaches across Hannah to the pile of blocks to select the same type of block she is using in her building. He begins a structure that mirrors the construction of the one Hannah is making. Hannah offers him verbal praise for this effort saying, "Good job, Razi!"

Hannah uses a combination of Arabic and English throughout the session with Razi. She praises him often, using English each time. When I asked Hannah later why she used only English when praising Razi, her response was that she wanted me to know when he had done something she had asked him to do.

As they continue to build separate structures, when Razi selects a red block, Hannah notes that Razi's shirt is red too. When she notices that Razi has placed a cylinder into the building he is making, she reaches across, removes it, and replaces it with a rectangle like the ones already in place. Hannah then removes the blocks from her building and one by one incorporates them into Razi's building. As Hannah does this, Razi contributes by adjusting the alignment of the blocks she has set in place. In Arabic, and then English, Hannah suggests they put a window into the structure. She selects an arch for this purpose and sets it in place. She chooses another arch and places it in front of Razi, asking him where that window should go. Razi points to the "wall" opposite the first window, and Hannah places the window there.

Hannah and Razi continue to build their house taking turns incorporating blocks until Hannah suggests they make a yard. Razi places his hands on his lap and watches as Hannah begins to build a "fence" off one side of the structure. Once Razi has an understanding of the dimensions of the fence, he contributes a block. When completed, the fence takes up more space than the house. Hannah then turns her attention back to the house, saying that they need to build a roof. She changes the alignment of the blocks Razi had last placed on the house before adding another block to make the roof. Hannah suggests that Razi add one more block onto the roof, when he does, she praises him. Hannah gives Razi another arch to place as a window, and then suggests that they add some trees. She passes him a red cylinder. Razi places the cylinder on the wall of the house. Hannah questions this placement, and then moves the cylinder to a location outside of the house. She adds a second cylinder on top to create a taller tree, before placing another tree inside the fence.

It is interesting to note that throughout the session Razi seldom places blocks without first being instructed to by Hannah. He spends a great deal of the time watching with his hands placed on his lap. On one occasion when Hannah passes him two blue blocks, he asks them to be replaced with red ones. In all other instances, he uses the blocks Hannah has selected. When Hannah determines that the structure is complete, she indicates verbally and by gesturing with her arm for Razi to now break the structure apart. Razi looks uncertainly at her. I intercede and say that I want to take a picture of the building before they knock it down.

Hannah and Chata

Chata enters the room first, going directly to the position closest to the blocks; he proceeds to tip the entire box full of blocks out on to the table. Hannah asks him what he wants to build. Holding the box in his hands, he responds by pointing to the pictures on the side while saying, "This." Agreeing, Hannah takes the box out of his hands and places it on the table. She points to the picture and tells Chata, "We have to look careful, and build." She clears a space in front of Chata and after studying the picture, selects two green rectangles that she places vertically in front of him. Chata places two yellow cubes, one on top of each rectangle.

Hannah points out that Chata has made a mistake. She points to the picture saying, "You see this? We need this one first." After removing the two cubes, Hannah selects the appropriate block and sets it into place. Chata studies the picture, and then agrees with Hannah's placement. Hannah passes him another block and he immediately starts to place it on top of the previously placed block. Hannah instructs him to look at the picture first and decide where the block should go. He complies then places the block where he had intended to before consulting the picture. Hannah then questions, what colour block is needed next? Chata quickly responds, "Red," and is praised for his answer.

This pattern of Chata placing a block and Hannah wondering what colour block is next, him consulting the picture and providing the answer, followed by her passing him the right block continues throughout the session. When the first structure is completed, Hannah asks Chata for a "high five."

They proceed to copy the pattern of another structure on the box. When Chata begins by selecting the wrong colour block, Hannah takes it out of his hand and sets the correct block in front of him. She then places another block beside the first structure. Chata begins to place a block, and Hannah prevents him saying, while pointing to the picture, "No, where does the blue go? Look there, look there." After studying the picture, Chata seems to have a clearer understanding of what blocks come next. He proceeds to add several blocks in quick succession, being praised by Hannah each time for his efforts and for knowing all his colours. At one point, Hannah strokes Chata on the back saying, "Good job Chata, excellent!" Chata requests another "high five."

As Chata continues to build according to the picture on the side of the box, Hannah sits, observing, with her hands resting on the table. When Chata places a red rectangle on top of a blue cube as the last block in the structure, he leans back, points, and exclaims, "It looks like a doghouse!" He then removes the "doghouse" from on top of the structure and places it on the table. The making of a "small dog" (he gestures small with his hands) and then a "large dog" (again gesturing with his hands) follows.

Hannah decides she wants to make a dog too; she looks over to see what Chata is doing so she can copy him. Chata, in the process of making his large dog, knocks one of the structures over. They both acknowledge this happening, and then Chata sets to rebuilding. He says he wants to make a "castle," and begins stacking blocks vertically one on top of the other. During this process, he glances over at what Hannah is doing and says, "No, no a dog!" Hannah complies and agrees to make a dog. It is clear however that she does not know how Chata had intended her to do this.

In the process of making the castle, the structure comes tumbling down again. Chata once more rebuilds. As he continues placing blocks to form a castle, Hannah tries to divert his attention to building a house. He entertains the idea verbally, but continues with the castle construction. He tops a series of vertical blocks with a red rectangle. He is proud of his work, and calls my attention to it. I remark that it is a very tall structure. Hannah compares the tallness of the structure to Chata also being tall.

Chata points to the top of the structure, a cube topped by a triangle, and says it is a "birdhouse." He reminds us about the doghouse he has already made. Hannah picks up the doghouse and shows it to me. She moves it to the front of the structure.

Chata picks up the doghouse and places it up high next to the birdhouse. Hannah questions this placement. Chata claims they are both birdhouses now.

Chata suddenly remembers that he has a car in his pocket. He takes it out and hands it to Hannah saying it belongs to daycare. Hannah decides that they should build a garage for the car. As Chata continues with the birdhouse construction theme, Hannah builds a garage in front of the house. Chata pauses from his work on the birdhouse and engages with Hannah in the car scenario for a short time. As he pushes the car along the table, Hannah asks if he is going to daycare or to school. When Chata replies, "School," Hannah praises him for going to school. She then asks him the name of his teacher. He replies, and Hannah repeats the teacher's name. Chata then talks about his dad driving the car. Hannah asks him where his dad sits in the car and where he sits. There seems to be some disagreement about which is the front and back of the car, and where he and his dad sit.

Chata then turns his attention back to his birdhouse building. He has a stack of seven cubes that he tops off with a red triangle. He now has two birdhouses of the same height side by side. Hannah asks him if he saw a bird this morning. He replies that he did. Hannah asks what the bird said, and he responds, "Cheep, cheep," while looking at Hannah. They both smile as Hannah says, "Cheep, cheep."

Hannah places two rectangles vertically in front of her. Chata places an arch spanning the two rectangles, with the archway facing downward. Hannah rotates the block so that the archway is facing upward. She brings another arch closer to where they are building. Chata takes the block out of her hand, and points to the picture on the box before placing the second arch on top of the first to form an oval opening between the two blocks. They return to their earlier pattern of Hannah questioning which colour block is next, Chata consulting the picture, and then offering the answer before placing the block.

Chata then decides to make Hannah's house by following another pattern on the side of the box. Hannah watches and offers verbal encouragement as well as stroking Chata on the back saying, "Good job!" The session ends with Chata driving the car "inside" Hannah's house and Hannah questioning him regarding whether this is where the car should go.

Discussion – Hannah

I see between Hannah and the three boys an interesting progression. Keon has very limited English language skills; it can be questioned how much of what Hannah was saying to him he actually understood. As well, his vocalizations, though interpreted by Hannah and responded to as though she knew what he was saying, were not intelligible comments. In this respect, in stereotypical developmental terms, Keon was very much at a "toddler" level of development, engaging in parallel play, vocalizing, but not in ways understandable to an outsider, and interested in sensory motor play such as dropping blocks off the table and on to the floor. Hannah responds to him in ways considered appropriate for a toddler. She tries to extend his speech, she tries to redirect his attention, and she shows expressions of enthusiasm for his sensory motor accomplishments.

Keon however, is not a toddler; he is instead an English language learner who is very new to Canada. Is treating him as though he were developmentally a "western toddler" beneficial to him as he learns English and begins to understand his new surroundings? I think not. He was not a toddler; he was due to begin kindergarten five months after this study occurred. It is incumbent upon the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice to find ways to honour his identity as a four-year-old Sudanese boy, with all of the competencies and capabilities of someone his age, within the space of being a non-English speaker new to Canada.

With Razi, we see that he has good comprehension in three languages, English, Arabic, and Dinka. We also see that he has a posture of respect, as he waits for direction, and follows Hannah's lead in the building. What he does not have is the knowledge accumulation necessary to participate fully in the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice. He does not initiate, and he only cautiously engages, after confirming his responses by looking to Hannah. For her part, Hannah seems mixed in her interactions with Razi. She sometimes uses techniques similar to the Sudanese mothers; she removes blocks from Razi's hands and from his construction if she considers them inappropriate. She also uses a great deal of verbal interaction, in keeping with developmentally appropriate practice, to bring forth concepts and knowledge acquisition.

My wonderment for Razi is if he will be able to keep his posture of respectful quiet observation as he enters the developmentally appropriate practice kindergarten setting. Will he find himself forced to adopt a more vocal and self-initiatory stance in the classroom in order to be judged competent and capable? There has to be space within the kindergarten community of practice for children who come from communities of practice where learning by watching is the norm rather than the exception.

Chata, on the other hand, has "got it all." He has strong English skills and he has learned the developmentally appropriate practice way of doing things. He has rapid-fire responses to the many concept-oriented questions Hannah has for him, and he takes the lead in deciding how to use the materials. The block building is "all about him," and he knows it.

Chata will do well at school. He is bright, outgoing, and he knows the "dance." He will in many ways break down stereotypes people might have about refugee children from Sudan. In reality, though, he is in only small ways Sudanese; he is very much Canadian. My thoughts are for his mother. How will Nyakesha continue to navigate her way as Chata continues to adopt Canadian ways at a pace she cannot possibly match? What conflicts will arise between her and the long line of educators who will come with the years of schooling they are about to enter? How can the values of Sudanese mothers reside alongside the values of the Canadian education system? Better still; might there be ways for the values of respect, and learning by example, to be incorporated into the way early childhood practice is done with all children, not just Sudanese children?

Cheri and Keon

Cheri helps Keon to settle into the chair further away from the blocks before positioning herself close to the blocks. She calls Keon's attention away from looking out the window behind the video camera by pointing to the blocks and saying, "Look, these are called blocks." Keon leans towards the blocks and sweeps an arm full closer to him. Cheri then sweeps more blocks his way. She watches to see what Keon is going to do with the blocks. He begins to form a line of blocks on the table by joining them end-to-end. He begins to "drive" the vehicle he has brought with him along the "road" of blocks. Keon vocalizes throughout the session, but none of what he says is understandable to either Cheri or me.

Cheri begins to add blocks to the road Keon has started. She repeatedly brings his attention back to the road as he becomes distracted by first the lights, then the door, and the light switch in the room. Cheri gives him the words that correspond to the items he focuses his attention on, but also calls his attention back to the blocks. At one point, Keon tries to drive his vehicle through the opening of an arch he has placed on the table. The archway is too low. Cheri places two arches together to form an oval through which the car will fit. After driving the vehicle through, Keon places a green cube into the oval to block off the opening. He then adds a few blocks in front of the structure to make a road leading up to it before driving the vehicle into the structure and knocking it apart.

After another distraction, with the door, window, lights, and light switch, Keon is drawn back to the table as Cheri pats the chair with her hand, saying, "Sit!" Back at the table, Cheri acknowledges to Keon, "You are telling me something about the lights and the door." She then watches as while "singing," Keon forms a line of blocks that reaches to the end of the table. By pointing, and saying, "put it here," she tries to direct him to place the next block at right angles to the row that has reached the table edge. Instead, he pushes the line of blocks so that each block falls deliberately, slowly, to the floor. He giggles, and then drops to the floor to retrieve the blocks. Cheri asks, "Oh, oh, Keon, what happened?" She answers her own question, "They fell down."

After a few moments of watching him pick up the blocks, Cheri taps the tabletop with her hand saying, "Are you picking them up, and putting them on the table?" She repeats, "The table." Cheri then begins to count the blocks as Keon picks them up. Keon, in returning each block to the table, creates a great deal of noise, as he drops them from a height or gives them a toss, rather than carefully setting them down.

After Keon is seated back on his chair, Cheri sets a rectangle horizontally in front of him, saying; "One." She adds a second block saying; "Two." Keon straightens the alignment of the two blocks. Cheri adds a third block, deliberately setting it on top of the first two in an offset manner, while saying; "Three." Keon again straightens the alignment of the blocks. The fourth block, Cheri places perpendicular to the first three. Keon turns the block ninety degrees to form a neat stack of four blocks. This pattern of Cheri adding a block in a perpendicular manner while assigning the correct number to the block, and Keon aligning the block so that the stack neatly forms, continues to six blocks before Keon is distracted by the video camera and leaves the table.

Cheri and Razi

Razi enters the room first, sits at the chair further away from the blocks, and pulls a hand full of blocks towards him. As she sits down Cheri remarks, "Wow, look at all these colourful blocks, Razi." She then asks as she looks his way, "Oh, what's happening here; what are you doing?" Razi has picked up two neutral arches and one yellow rectangle. He stacks the arches on top of one another then slides the yellow rectangle through the opening in the first arch. Cheri repeats, "What are you doing?" Razi responds, "I'm making upstairs."

He then takes apart the arch structure he has made and reaches into the pile of blocks to select an orange rectangle that he brings alongside the yellow rectangle he had used previously. The orange rectangle is shorter than the yellow one. He returns it to the pile and selects a yellow one to match the one already in front of him. He brushes the arches out of the way and sets the two yellow rectangles horizontally on the table paralleling one another. Cheri continues to question what he is doing and asks whether she can build with him. He repeats again that he is making "upstairs."

As I watch this episode, Razi seems poised to act as he had with his mother. He is setting himself up to build with the blocks. Cheri, in developmentally appropriate fashion is trying to engage Razi in conversation about what he is doing. She wants some "lead" to follow; something she can relate to and begin to "build on." Rather than taking up her own building project, Cheri enters Razi's construction by pushing a green rectangle up against his arm. Razi is forced to move his arm out of the way so Cheri can place her rectangle alongside the two he has already placed. Razi adjusts the three rectangles in such a manner so they begin to form a "pyramid" and Cheri adds a blue rectangle alongside, paralleling the set of three blocks.

Cheri asks what he needs to make his upstairs. He suggests, "a window," and adds the arch to the top of the three rectangles. He places the second arch on top of the first. Cheri points to the second arch and asks what it is. Razi shrugs his shoulders in response. Cheri adds an orange pillar on top of the arch, and Razi places a blue rectangle into the opening of the second arch. Cheri adds another orange pillar then places a blue rectangle on top of the two orange pillars, spanning the distance between them. She then leans forward to look through the opening created. Razi leans forward and looks from the other end. Cheri asks, "Does that look like a window?" Razi offers no response.

Cheri continues, "What else are you going to make for the house?" Razi suggests a door, and after Cheri asks where he is going to put the door, he picks up a blue pillar and places it in front of the structure. She repeats the question of what else the house needs, and Razi replies, "A chair." After contemplating this, Cheri begins to reach into the pile of blocks to seemingly select some "chair blocks." She then withdraws her hand and instead asks Razi what he needs to make the chair. He pulls from the pile the orange rectangle Cheri had been contemplating before withdrawing her arm. Razi places this block alongside the structure. Cheri wonders who is going to sit on the chair. Razi says, "Me." He selects a red pillar from the pile of blocks, but does not place it on the chair. Cheri asks if she can sit beside Razi. Without receiving an answer, she builds her own chair and places a block as an imaginary person sitting on it and positions it alongside the chair Razi had set in place.

With the two chairs positioned, Cheri asks what they are going to do now. Razi replies, "Nothing." Unable to accept "nothing" as an answer, Cheri suggests they colour, or watch television. In the mean time, Razi has added a triangle to the top of the structure the two of them have built. Cheri wonders what it is that Razi has added. Razi offers no response.

Cheri then places two arches together at one end of the structure to form an oval opening between the blocks. Razi, with his hands resting on the table, watches what she is doing before reaching over to place a blue half circle into the oval opening. Cheri again questions what he has made. He shrugs his shoulders repeatedly. Cheri suggests that it is a dog. Razi nods, Cheri adds more blocks to the structure wondering, "What else?" Razi again shrugs his shoulders, and after seeing the blocks Cheri has added, selects similar blocks and too adds them to the structure.

Cheri then decides she is going to make a "garage." Razi agrees, and turns his body so he can see directly what Cheri is doing. She places two rectangles vertically, with space left between the two of them. She then asks Razi what else is needed. He shrugs, and Cheri adds another rectangle on top of the two vertical rectangles, spanning the distance between them, to form two "walls" and a "roof." Razi sits watching with his hands on the table. Cheri asks, "What do we need for the garage?" Razi watches as Cheri begins to push a blue half circle along the table while making "driving noises." Cheri asks repeatedly, "What's this?" When she says, "Beep, beep," Razi answers, "A car."

Razi stands a rectangle up and places it in the space designated the garage. To me it looks like a door, but Cheri suggests that this is Razi's car. He then lays the block down horizontally, and begins to shuffle it between his hands while resting it on the table. He offers, "We have our own car." After acknowledging that they both have cars, Cheri goes on to drive and talk about coming to visit Razi. He says that there is nobody home. Cheri offers to wait, and then asks what time he is going to come home. When Razi says six o'clock, Cheri "complains" that she will have to wait a long time, and wonders where he is going. "To the doctor" is his reply.

Razi is now looking up at the camera, or me, his elbow on the table, and his head resting in his hand. He leans away from Cheri. When asked why he is going to the doctor, he tells Cheri he is going next week with his dad. She repeats this information, and then asks if it is fun to go to the doctor. Razi says, "They have toys and blocks." When Cheri asks what kind of blocks, he first answers, "Five," and then changes his answer to, "a lot." Cheri asks him to show her "five." Razi quickly counts while touching the fingers of one hand. He counts beyond five. Cheri suggests they try again. She touches each of Razi's fingers one at a time as she counts, "One, two, can you count with me, three, four, five." Razi joins in the counting at three, and then Cheri initiates a "high five" as she praises him for his counting.

Cheri then suggests that they stack five blocks. She stacks two on her own; Razi shrugs and turns his attention to the blue half circle that had been Cheri's car and decides it is going to be a television. He sets the television beside the house, places his arms by his side, and looks at the video camera (or me). When Cheri asks what is on TV, Razi replies, "Spiderman."

All the while, Cheri continues to place blocks in various configurations in front of where she is seated. After placing a rectangle angling off a cube to form a ramp, she tells Razi she is making a playground. She asks him what the structure she has made looks like. He shrugs and looks up at the camera (or me). Cheri tells him it is a slide and sends a cube sliding down while saying, "That's Razi." She invites him to play in the playground. Razi sends a cube down the slide a few times. When he leans away and looks at the camera (or me), I end the session.

Cheri and Chata

Upon first entering the room, Chata comes directly to the video camera and looks through the viewfinder. Cheri stands behind the table and waits for Chata to join her. When Chata goes to the table, he takes the position closest to the blocks. He enthusiastically tips the contents of the box containing the blocks on to the table, and pointing to the picture on the side of the box says, "I want to make this one." Cheri agrees, and helps position the box so they can both see the picture.

Chata sets two rectangles vertically on the table in front of him, and adds an arch spanning the distance between the rectangles. The structure is unstable, and falls to the table. Cheri consults the picture, and then selects two orange rectangles, one shorter than the other, and places them vertically on the table in front of her. Chata quickly glances over and says, "It's too small." Cheri agrees, and wonders then what to do next. Chata stands up to get a better look at the selection of blocks, and chooses an orange rectangle that matches the length of the longer one Cheri had used. Chata sets the block in place, and adds the arch that had fallen from his structure to the top of the two orange rectangles. Cheri points to the picture and indicates that something is amiss with this construction. Chata too points to the picture and inadvertently knocks the box off the table. When he retrieves it, he sees another picture on a different side of the box. He tries to communicate something to Cheri about this picture, but she draws his attention back to the original picture and asks again which one they are making. Chata wants to make the whole series of structures demonstrated in the picture on the box. He indicates this by pointing repeatedly and saying, "This one, and this one, and this one, and this one." Cheri suggests then, that they better get started.

Chata points to one of the pictures while saying, "This is a birdhouse." Cheri has difficulty understanding what Chata is saying, and he has to repeat himself several times to be understood. Cheri decides that she will build a birdhouse too, and places two rectangles vertically on the table in front of her. Chata passes her an orange triangle and tells her she needs that one. When Cheri asks him where she should put it, he indicates it should go on top of the two rectangles. Cheri places the triangle on its side, with the top of the triangle pointing towards her rather than upward. She asks Chata if she has done it correctly. He removes the triangle and says, "No, I'll show you," as he rotates the triangle and replaces it, with the apex up, on the two uprights. In the mean time, Chata has added a cube topped by an orange triangle to the top of the structure he has made from two vertical rectangles and two arches.

They both examine the birdhouses while Cheri makes "bird noises" and uses her fingers to pretend to fly into the birdhouse in front of her.

Chata is not satisfied with the birdhouse Cheri has made, and knocks it to the table. He picks up a blue cube to match the one in his birdhouse. He adds this and the orange triangle alongside the one already on his structure, and indicates that he now has two birdhouses. As he tries to adjust the alignment of the two birdhouses, the structure is knocked down. They both giggle about this, and Chata begins rebuilding. He places the two orange rectangles, and two arches, then realizes there is something wrong with this construction, and consults the picture. He makes changes, and in so doing knocks the structure over again.

As he rebuilds a third time, he leaves the orange rectangles out and creates a stack of five arches before adding a series of cubes. When Cheri tries to help by adding an orange rectangle on top, he takes the block from her hand. She then decides to make her own birdhouse. When Cheri indicates that her birdhouse is finished, Chata corrects her by adding an orange rectangle to the top of the structure. Cheri asks Chata for the name of the top of the birdhouse. He is uncertain of what she is asking. She gestures with her arms, a triangle shape above her head, and says it is a "roof."

Chata indicates that he has several birdhouses, since he has several cubes stacked on top of the arches. Cheri asks him how many he has, and he answers, "Five." Cheri questions this number and asks him to count with her. They count together to "four." Chata adds another cube, and then a horizontally placed rectangle. The structure wobbles and they both comment on this. Chata adds another cube, and raising his arms in the air remarks that the structure is as high as he is. Cheri uses her arm to compare the height between Chata and the blocks, and agrees that they are almost the same height. Cheri wonders how many blocks there are in the total structure, and invites Chata to count them. Cheri points to each block as he counts to twelve. When Chata adds another block the structure crashes down. They both delight in this happening.

After Chata retrieves the blocks that have fallen to the floor, he indicates what he would like to build next, but Cheri cannot understand the word he is saying. Chata leaves the table to look through the viewfinder of the video camera after several frustrated attempts to be understood.

Discussion – Cheri

What is most noteworthy in the session with Cheri and Keon is the distractibility of Keon. I have no doubt that in the eyes of many early childhood educators, had they observed this session, he would very quickly, because of this behaviour, be labelled "hyperactive" or as having "attention deficit disorder," and it be suggested that a psychologist be called to provide an "assessment." This is not how I read the situation however. Keon is a child who, before arriving in Edmonton six months ago, had only known refugee camp life. So much of what for Canadian born children has long since lost its fascination, lights, light switches, and doorknobs, he is only now discovering. He also seems to be enjoying the sound of the blocks hitting the floor and the sound they make when he returns them to the table. This again is reminiscent of the learning typical of toddlers, as was discussed in the interaction between Hannah and Keon.

I repeat my concern: because Keon's exploration of his new world might be perceived as "toddler behaviour," he might tend to be treated in a manner that discounts who he really is and what he knows and is capable of doing. We see this in Cheri's interactions with him. She tries to get him to repeat words after her, asks him questions, then gives him the answer he was expected to give, and tests his ability by repeating the same action over and over to see if he will give the same response. These are all actions typical of developmentally appropriate practice when working with children under three years of age.

While it is the case, Keon has some "catching up" to do; he has missed many of the learning experiences of Canadian born children that would socialize him towards normative expressions of his knowledge and understanding. This however does not mean that he is "delayed" or "deficient." He is a fully capable and competent member of the communities of practice of which he was a member before a plane flight brought him to this new location. Our task within the early childhood community of practice is to find ways to add to what Keon already knows. Too often, the knowledge refugee children bring is not even acknowledged, let alone valued within the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice. We are only looking for what is missing, and not for what the child brings.

One of the things I find interesting about the relationship between Cheri and Razi as portrayed in the block building is that though Cheri solicits Razi's contributions, they are not taken seriously. For example, in placing an arch that he considered a window, Cheri builds on top of the arch what she considers a window. When she then asks Razi if what she built looks like a window, Razi offers no response. It is no wonder that Razi does not offer a response. What in fact would be the right answer?

I believe what is happening here with Cheri and Razi is an effort on Cheri's part to follow developmentally appropriate practice. The problem is, however, Razi does not know his half of the developmentally appropriate practice partnership. Cheri wants to utilize "child centred practice." She attempts to make Razi the centre around which she will base her interactions. She sits with her hands on her lap at the start of the session and repeatedly asks Razi what he is doing. She wants to "follow the child's lead," as she has been taught to do; however in this case, the child first needs coaxing into playing his part.

Finally thrown a "lead," when Razi says he is "making upstairs," Cheri is visibly excited. She sets down the blocks she was holding, leans towards Razi, and repeats what he has said with an air of anticipation in her voice. Given this lead, Cheri wants to "extend the play." She essentially "forces" her way into what Razi is doing by pushing a block up against his arm. This happens again when she sets her "chair" alongside his even though he had not accepted her request to do so.

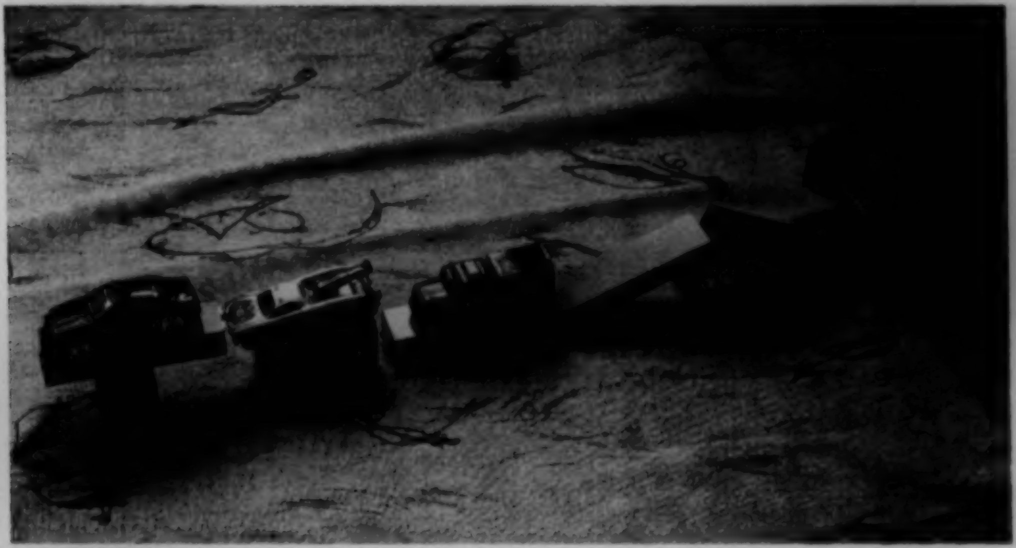
Cheri appears uncomfortable in a situation where she is not able to interact in ways consistent with developmentally appropriate practice. This is further emphasized when having achieved some "success" at having Razi reciprocate her advances, and having established a house around which they can begin to interact, Cheri launches into the pinnacle of developmentally appropriate practice – "dramatic play." Razi however is reluctant to engage. He does not know that in the developmentally appropriate practice model of adult/child interactions, the point of building is not simply building, but rather to get something built so one can then engage in the sought after opportunity for language and socio-emotional development that comes with dramatic play. With his mother, the task was building, and nothing more. Now with Cheri's repeated attempts to engage in scenarios befitting of "playing house," he sometimes takes up the invitation, but also many times shrugs off her suggestions.

Razi looks visibly uncomfortable; he fidgets in his chair and looks up at the camera, or me, many times, while leaning away from Cheri. Near the end of the taping he seems resigned to answering Cheri's questions and offering her the interactions she is looking for, perhaps in hope of ending the session.

Cheri too seems uncomfortable, no doubt feeling like she is on display, and wanting to make a good impression during the taping; Razi is not making it easy for her. Having experienced the unity of building with his mother, followed by the session with Hannah that contained more familiar elements than this session with Cheri, Razi is uncertain.

With Chata, Cheri has found what she is looking for. He is self-motivated, responsive, and in fact takes the lead in directing the session. Cheri both tacitly and deliberately encourages his leadership when on occasion she makes mistakes such as placing the triangle sideways, invites him to critique what she has done, and remains passive when he removes blocks from her hands or dismantles what she has built. Cheri is comfortable, and so is Chata; all is right with the world.

Bonita and Keon



As Bonita and Keon are heard walking down the hallway, Keon is vocalizing in a "sing-song" voice. Bonita is heard mimicking what he is saying. Keon goes directly to the video camera and looks through the viewfinder. Bonita, using the Nuer word for "come" calls Keon to the table. When he does not comply Bonita advances to the camera, and taking him by the hand, helps him to sit on the chair further away from the blocks. Once they are both seated, Bonita calls Keon's attention to the blocks, saying, "Wow, look what we have in here!"

Keon has brought vehicles with him, and so has Bonita. As Keon gives his attention to the white car Bonita has set on the table, Bonita remarks, "You like cars, I know. Should we make something for the cars?" While Keon begins to drive the car, Bonita makes a "ramp" out of a cube and two yellow rectangles. Keon drives the car down the ramp. They both continue to add sections to the ramp and road construction. Keon vocalizes from time to time throughout the session, and though what he is saying is not decipherable, Bonita makes assumptions about what he is saying. At one point Bonita points to the fire truck Keon is holding and asks him what it is. She repeats her question three times. When Keon does not reply she provides the answer in a questioning tone of voice, "Fire truck?" Bonita carries on this type of "monologue" throughout the session.

When one of the vehicles drops from an elevated block structure and falls near the edge of the table, Keon decides to send the vehicle off the edge of the table on to the floor. He then drives a second vehicle off the table. Bonita offers a commentary about what is happening; "Oh, oh, the red car fell down, and now the white car is on the floor." Keon picks up the vehicles and places all three in a line near the edge of the table. He then sends all three crashing off the table.

While down on the floor retrieving the vehicles, Keon notices the pictures on the side of the box the blocks are spilling out of. He makes some remarks to which Bonita replies, "Is that right." He continues to say something as Bonita points to the pictures and repeats several times, "Blocks," each time carefully articulating the letter sounds. Keon tips the contents of the box onto the table as Bonita narrates what he is doing. Keon briefly "sings" into the box, hearing a different sound to his voice, before setting the box down on the table. Bonita adjusts the positioning of the box as Keon picks up some blocks that have fallen to the floor.

Now standing beside the table with easy access to the blocks, Keon tries to stack an arch on top of a vertical rectangle, while counting, "One, two, four." Bonita praises him for his "good counting." Continuing to vocalize in a singsong voice, Keon sets down a length of blocks that reaches to the corner of the table. He then places a vehicle at the end of the row and the vehicle and the block fall to the floor.

They both share a laugh about this while Keon retrieves the block and vehicle before becoming distracted by the camera.

Bonita and Razi

Razi enters the room first and assumes the chair further away from the blocks. He offers that he can make a house with the blocks, but Bonita misunderstands and thinks he has said he "cannot" make a house. He repeats that he "can," and reaches towards the pile of blocks. He brings a red pillar and a red cube to in front of where he is seated. He begins to shuffle the blocks around on the table. Bonita asks if he would like more blocks, then selects some blocks that she uses to begin a structure in front of where she is seated. Razi glances back and forth between the camera (or me) and Bonita, all the while keeping track of what Bonita is doing.

Bonita places two arches together so they form an oval opening. She again asks Razi if he wants more blocks. He nods, and Bonita gestures towards the box. Instead of helping himself to more blocks, Razi reaches to the oval configuration in front of Bonita and vertically places a red pillar he had been holding in his hand. Bonita asks Razi if she should move the structure closer to him. He nods in agreement. Razi then places the red cube he was holding in his hand into the oval opening. Bonita praises him for his "good idea."

When Bonita wonders what else they can put into the structure, Razi reaches for a neutral pillar and places it perpendicular to the pillar he had just placed. This receives him an, "Excellent!" Bonita notes that he has used "red" and "brown" blocks. Razi adds another red block and is once again praised. When Razi reaches for a blue block, Bonita questions him as to its colour. Without answering, Razi leans away from Bonita and moves the blue block to the front of the structure. Bonita touches the block and says it is a "blue one," accentuating each of the sounds in "blue." Razi reaches for an orange block and Bonita comments on its colour. He adds two more orange blocks and Bonita says how colourful the structure is becoming. While touching the last block Razi has placed, Bonita asks him what colour it is. He answers, "orange."

After examining the structure, Bonita wonders what other shapes are in the box. She sweeps a few blocks closer to within Razi's reach with her arm. Razi pulls two blocks closer to him while Bonita finds first, an orange triangle that she brings to Razi's attention, and then a half circle. Bonita puts two half circles together and places them inside the oval opening of two arches in front of her. Razi leans back and watches what she is doing. Twice, Bonita asks Razi if he would like to use what she has made. When he nods, she gestures and says, "Go ahead; take it. You can use it. Where would you like to put it?" Razi reaches and adds two more blocks to the structure in front of him. Bonita continues, "Tell me, where would you like to put it, and I will move it over. Where would you like these blocks?" Razi looks at Bonita then touches the front of his structure with his hand. Acknowledging where Razi has pointed, Bonita points to the spot and says, "So, can you say, here, please." Razi leans away and does not answer. Bonita again touches the place Razi has indicated, saying, "Can you tell me; I want the block here!" Her voice rises with the final word, "here." Razi again indicates with his hand where he wants the blocks moved. "You want the block there?" Bonita questions. She then cups her hand to her ear and leans towards Razi, saying, "I can't hear you; ask me!" Razi again nods. Bonita concludes, "No, okay, I'll move them there!" She raises her voice again at the end of the sentence. When the blocks are in place, Bonita asks Razi if they are all right, "Yes, or no?" Razi nods, and Bonita tells him, "You can say yes!" Razi says, "Yes!" mimicking the tone in Bonita's voice. He is praised and thanked for his response.

Bonita wonders what else they can put into the structure. Razi reaches for some blocks and adds them. Bonita offers him praise, and then wonders what the structure is, "Is it a house?" Razi agrees by nodding twice and verbally acknowledging that it is a house. Bonita then questions whether it is his house. When he verbally acknowledges that it is, Bonita asks him who lives in his house. Razi says, his dad and his brother do. Bonita repeats what Razi has said, and asks what is his brother's name. Razi shrugs. Bonita says it is okay that he does not know his brother's name and then asks who else lives in his house. Razi offers that he has lots of brothers, and Bonita questions him as to how many. Using her fingers she indicates, "Two, three, how many?" Razi looks at Bonita and says, "Three?" in a questioning tone of voice. Bonita indicates with her fingers, and agrees, "Three, brothers," emphasizing the word "three." She continues and asks Razi if he has a sister. When Razi nods yes, Bonita asks if he knows his sister's name. Razi shakes his head, and then reaches for more blocks, saying, "I need more." Bonita repeats what he has said. Razi offers that his mother knows his brother's name. Bonita asks if he knows his mom's name. He nods and says, "Nyalah." Bonita comments on what a beautiful name his mother has before asking what his dad's name is. When Razi shrugs, Bonita suggests what she thinks is his dad's name.

Razi places a few blocks into the structure in front of him, while Bonita begins building her own structure in front of where she is seated. She comments that she has many brothers too. Razi glances at the camera (or me) and adjusts the placement of some of the blocks in his structure. Bonita tells him that she has a dog at her house. Razi looks at her and questions whether it is a "big dog." Bonita gestures with her hands and replies that it is a "small dog." Razi points out that dogs are not allowed at school, and that the dog is looking after Bonita's house. Bonita agrees, and a short interchange about dogs ensues. As Bonita continues building her structure, Razi watches, and adjusts the alignment of some of the blocks on his structure.

Bonita changes the subject, and wonders how they will get to Razi's house, by car or bus. Razi says, "By bus." Bonita has formed a vehicle out of blocks that she pushes along the table in front of her. She tells Razi, "This is my car to go to my house." She parks the car as Razi sits watching. Bonita offers him more blocks, but he shakes his head. She then asks if there is something else he would like to put in his house. Razi says, "A chair." Bonita enthusiastically wonders how they might make a chair. Razi places a block on the "wall" of his house, as Bonita slides more blocks towards Razi. Bonita decides to put a chair in her house too. She realizes, because of the way she has constructed it, there is no possibility of placing a chair inside her house, so she places the chair in front of her house. When Bonita questions what else they can put in Razi's house, he says, "A TV." Bonita thinks this is a good idea and asks which block is going to be the TV. Razi indicates the orange triangle that is already in place in his structure. Bonita solicits information about which television shows Razi likes to watch, and shares what she likes to watch with her granddaughters.

Razi watches as Bonita builds another structure with the blocks in front of her, and then offers that he has a camera at home. He places a "camera" in his house and offers Bonita a block to use as a camera in her house. The session ends with Bonita remarking how large Razi's house is, and her leading him in counting the number of blocks he has used.

Bonita and Chata

Bonita asks as they enter the room, "What do we have in here? What are those, Chata?" Going directly to the box of blocks, Chata empties the contents onto the table. He tells Bonita that these are "blocks," but she is not satisfied with his pronunciation. A repetitive interchange of Bonita saying "blocks" while emphasizing each of the letter sounds, and Chata repeating after her results. This pattern of Bonita trying to have Chata articulate certain words occurs repeatedly in the session.

Once the blocks have been emptied on to the table, Bonita asks Chata what he would like to build with the blocks. He points to the pictures on the side of the box saying, "I want to build that one." Bonita agrees, and after examining the pictures asks Chata what he needs. He says he needs "help." Bonita wonders where they start. In the mean time, Chata has placed an orange triangle on top of a yellow cube, and informs Bonita that it is a "doghouse." After working with Chata on the pronunciation of "doghouse," Bonita selects a green pillar from the pile of blocks. Chata informs her that this is not the right block. He stands up and searchers through the blocks until he finds another orange triangle that he places on top of a blue cube. Chata then tries to balance a blue rectangle on top of the two birdhouses. The distance between the triangle tops is too great for the rectangle to span. Bonita wonders how he might solve this problem. She gestures with her hands to make the distance between the two structures less at the same time as Chata begins to do this of his own accord. Bonita praises him for his problem solving ability. When bringing the two birdhouses closer together still does not allow him to place the rectangle on top, he asks Bonita for help.

Bonita looks for a longer rectangle and after first trying unsuccessfully with the shorter one, begins to set the longer one in place. Chata reaches to take the rectangle out of her hand. Bonita stops, asks Chata if he would like to try, and passes him the block. He successfully places the red rectangle as spanning the roofs of the two birdhouses. He is pleased with his success, and Bonita offers him much praise. He then adds two more blocks, one of which is blue. Bonita questions him about what colour it is, and he easily replies with the correct answer. He then turns his attention back to the picture on the side of the box and indicates that he wants to make "that one." They both compare what Chata has made, and what the picture looks like. He decides on two red blocks that he places and then adds three arches. He then searches the pile for a particular block. Bonita helps him to find it by saying; "I see it, in between a green, an orange, and a blue one." When Chata still cannot find it, Bonita indicates with her finger which area it is in. Chata is delighted when he finds the block he is looking for.

Returning to looking at the picture, Chata decides what he wants to build next. Bonita questions him as to which blocks he will need. As Chata searches for the right blocks, Bonita sits with her hands in her lap and watches. When Chata finds and places the blocks he was looking for, he sits back on his chair, surveys what he has made, and tells Bonita it is a "birdhouse." After some discussion about both a doghouse and a birdhouse being incorporated into his structure, Chata adds that there is a caterpillar also living at the very top of the building. Bonita praises him for such an interesting idea.

Chata continues to add blocks to the structure, and decides that the triangles he places inside the oval openings of the previously places arches, are cars. Bonita has him work on the pronunciation of "these" before asking him how many cars he has. After providing the correct number, Bonita asks him what colour they are. They agree that there are two orange cars.

Chata then tries to make a "man" out of the blocks. When this is unsuccessful, he turns to showing Bonita how to make levers to catapult the blocks into the air. Bonita follows his directions and asks him for information about how to make the catapult work. When the structure he has made is knocked over, he rebuilds it. Bonita occasionally helps with the placement of blocks or in offering direction to find the right block, but for the most part, she sits with her hands on her lap offering verbal encouragement. She continues to correct his speech as the session proceeds.

When the structure has been rebuilt, Chata directs Bonita to tap horizontal blocks resting on the table with a set of blocks being held in their hands like drumsticks. After playing loudly for a few seconds, he softens the way he strikes the blocks and directs her to "play softly" too. He then decides to build Bonita's house. He repeatedly tries to have Bonita understand a particular word, but is unsuccessful. He knocks together two blue half circles, and enjoys the sound they make. He calls Bonita's attention to this, and she picks up two rectangles and begins knocking them together. Bonita questions whether the two sets of blocks sound the same, before the session ends.

Discussion – Bonita

Sociolinguistics (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert & Leap, 2000), and in particular the study of "caregiver speech" or "Motherese" applied within the cross-cultural context (Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986), is a field of study that goes beyond the scope of this research. I find it worthwhile to note however, the one word the early childhood educators had learned in Nuer and used with Keon is; "come." Why is this? Were they finding his distractibility a problem and felt they needed to know how to draw his attention to things they determined important? What does this say to him that the only word in his home language spoken by these women is a request for his compliance? The language we choose to use and the ways we choose to use it are fundamental considerations in the reconceptualization of early childhood practice.

We see with the early childhood educators generally, and Bonita in particular, encouraging the use of English is a focus with all three Sudanese boys. With Keon, Bonita keeps up a steady monologue, and on occasion tries to have him copy her speech. Razi's non-verbal communication is insufficient, he is made to verbally respond, and Chata is expected to repeat words until they are deemed as pronounced correctly. I know Bonita brings to her present position extensive experience working with "special needs" children, and has had training in supporting children with speech "problems" and "delays." I see these influences at work here, and question their appropriateness.

Keon is not "speech delayed," he is an English language learner (ELL). Razi does not have "speech problems," he is acting in ways consistent with his sociocultural-historical background. Finally, Chata's only "problem" I believe is he has grown up hearing and speaking Nuer at home, and English in other contexts and so has acquired some idiosyncratic speech patterns. Within the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice, it is common to treat ELL children in the same way we treat children for whom we have speech concerns. I feel this does not do justice to the particular learning needs of this population of children.

We see a change in Razi at the outset of the session with Bonita. This is his final taping; he has experienced the block use with his mother, Hannah, and Cheri. He presents himself as having "gotten with the program." When he first enters the room, he announces that he is going to "make a house!" However, he still waits for Bonita to begin, he sits shuffling blocks and glancing sideways to see what she is doing. Bonita, for her part, insists that Razi take initiative. She asks him if he wants some blocks, but does not in any way facilitate this happening, she expects him to reach across and get his own blocks.

We see this expectation for "leadership" and "personal initiative" further emphasized in Bonita's insistence that Razi do more than gesture where he wants certain blocks moved. In the scenario with his mother, Nyalah gave Razi the blocks she deemed unsuitable for her own use, and Razi always respected her by never reaching to take any blocks other than those she offered. I wonder if Bonita, by steadfastly insisting (in developmentally appropriate fashion) that Razi take initiative, is perhaps compromising some of the core values Razi's family is working to instil.

As was discussed earlier in the interactions between Cheri and the boys, the same move to "dramatic play" is evident here with Bonita. A house is built so then the real action can begin. Cars, people, chairs, televisions all facilitate the beginning of the main event. Also of significance is the use of "questioning" by Bonita. Razi is "quizzed" about his family members, presumably to facilitate his cognitive development, and all the boys are asked pointed questions related to concepts such as colour and number.

According to developmentally appropriate practice, knowledge formation comes through "learning through play." The adult role is to guide, mediate, and facilitate children's play, to ask questions, and to lead children towards acquiring the skills and information needed to successfully enter the school setting. Bonita is well steeped in this model and as demonstrated here, little room is left for Razi to bring who he is to the relationship.

Chata, as was demonstrated with Hannah and Cheri, has leadership skills and self-motivation that are much valued and encouraged. Bonita also praises him for his problem solving skills and his ideas. She guides him on occasion towards finding the blocks he is looking for, but does not otherwise intervene. Bonita sits passively with her hands on her lap. Her role is to allow Chata freedom to explore the materials, while at the same time jumping in when opportunities arise to both promote and test his knowledge acquisition or his pronunciation.

One final interesting point to make with respect to the use of the blocks is the noted difference between the structures made by the Sudanese women, and in this case Razi as well, and those made by Cheri and Bonita. Within the buildings made by the Sudanese, there is physical space in which to "reside." The buildings are miniature models of functional homes. Razi has space in his house for a chair, a TV, and a camera. Bonita however, is forced to place her chair and camera in front of the house because there is not physical space within the house. The blocks are not used to make a representative house; the blocks are the house. The construction is not open; the building is solid.

I find this relevant on two levels. First, block building often is used as a tool of assessment when determining whether children are progressing according to "developmental norms." If within the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice, block building is commonly understood to occur in ways demonstrated by Bonita and Cheri, and children complete the task differently, this could be interpreted as "a problem" rather than a representation of their learning having been mediated differently in the communities of practice from which they come.

Second, I do believe the Sudanese women are signifying something important about their cultural values in the way they utilize the blocks. The open construction can be interpreted as representative of the emphasis placed on family and community involvement in the daily life and in the rearing of children in their more familiar communities of practice. The developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice must begin to take notice of such differences for it is in the everyday, and in the unspoken actions that the meaning and values of a culture reside.

Summary

Though the three early childhood educators have diverse ethnocultural backgrounds and early life histories, the ways of developmentally appropriate early childhood practice seem deeply engrained in each of them. There is much talking, with an emphasis on the asking of questions. For the most part, the questions are designed to solicit information related to the acquisition of concepts such as size, shape, colour, and number. In other words, school readiness skills are at the forefront of the interactions. The emphasis is not on building with the blocks, the emphasis is on using the block building for the aim of imparting "school readiness" knowledge.

I have been moved by the deep connection Razi and his mother held as they partook in the building endeavour, and the contrast this way of being holds against the interactions that take place between Razi and each of the early childhood educators. Razi visibly leans away from the early childhood educators as he is "barraged" with questions. Fleer (2003), in her examination of the "taken-for-granted" aspects of developmentally appropriate practice states,

> The privileging of a question-based pattern of interaction in early childhood centres and schools has meant that some children are faced with the task of

> not just learning the content, but also the codes for participating effectively in the learning practises to have access to the content. (pp. 74-75)

Fleer suggests that the privileging of one interaction style serves to silence other ways of being with young children. She calls for the decentring of one interaction style, so that marginalized voices can be heard.

The use of verbal praise by the early childhood educators as reinforcement for learning is worthy of note. Quinn (2005), in discussing cultural aspects of childrearing gives several examples of how parents use emotional arousal to reinforce children's learning. Beating, frightening, teasing, shaming, and praising are some of the techniques described. Within developmentally appropriate practice, praise is the only acceptable method available to reinforce and make memorable the learning adults want children to attain. While not necessarily condoning the other methods of emotional arousal listed by Quinn, it is helpful to know the motivation behind the techniques. Universally, adults use emotional arousal as a way of motivating children. In looking to the interactions of parents and children new to Canada, it may be possible for the early childhood community of practice to expand upon the repertoire of ways used to reinforce children's learning.

Something else evident in the way the three early childhood educators interact with the three Sudanese boys is the primacy of "hands on" manipulation. The two reluctant boys, Keon and Razi are essentially "forced" to use the blocks. They are told where to place the blocks, how to use the blocks, and their compliance to these requests is expected. The boys are not allowed to passively watch, they are to be actively involved in the building. Fleer (2003) comments on this Piagetian focus upon sensory and motor involvement. "We have assumed that the best way to learn is through activity and not sitting and watching – since watching is considered a passive activity" (p. 76).

One final impression I have of the interactions between the Sudanese boys and the early childhood educators is the emphasis on "role-playing," or "dramatic play," with the blocks used as props. In most instances, the purpose behind the block building was not simply to immerse oneself in the task of building, but rather to quickly get something built, a house or a road, so that the play could move in the direction of "playing house" or driving cars. Of course, in the role-playing, the use of language is privileged. While acknowledging the development of language and literacy skills is essential to these boys' future "success" in Canadian schooling, I wonder what is lost in their indigenous ways of knowing and being as we insist they adopt developmentally appropriate ways of being in the world.

Chapter 7 - Research Implications

The research question this study intended to address is, how does the transition to a new culture shape the way refugee parents and their preschool children relate and interact? Furthermore, I asked what role do early childhood educators play and how does developmentally appropriate practice affect this transition? In particular, how is preschool refugee children's learning guided or mediated by their parents and by early childhood educators while in this transition phase?

Phase 1 of this research, and the identification of eight key settlement issues refugee families with preschool children encounter during their transition to life in Edmonton, informs the question of how resettlement in a new culture shapes the way refugee parents and their preschool children relate and interact. No longer embraced by familiar "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998), refugee families immersed in strange practices, an unfamiliar language, and multiple other challenges, struggle to find their place. The concerns summarized in this chapter, provide the early learning and care community of practice with background information necessary to developing culturally relevant and respectful relationships with refugee families. This information also sets the stage for the analysis of Phase 2 data that addresses the question of how the learning of preschool children is mediated by their parents and by early childhood educators during this transition. The interactions of three Sudanese mothers and sons are compared and contrasted with the ways of guidance and mediation used by three early childhood educators with these same three boys. The problematizing, deconstructing, and reconceptualizing of the developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice, in light of refugee resettlement, is the focus of this second phase.

Resettlement Implications

Parents spoke in focus groups and interviews about their "socioeconomic status" since coming to Edmonton. Many refugees arrive in Canada after protracted stays in refugee camps or other temporary settlements, and as for example with some of the Kurdish population, may have known only refugee camp life. Persons displaced from their anticipated life course as children or young adults, have been deprived the opportunity to obtain an education and the life skills necessary to develop job related abilities. Those challenges, coupled with not knowing English, place refugees at a severe economic disadvantage. It is sometimes forgotten however that for many refugees, before the turmoil of war forced them into exodus, they were leading satisfying lives. As one Afghan mother remarked, "We were very comfortable; we had relatives, houses, and husbands. Some of us belonged to wealthy, well-known families."

Refugees, whatever their pre-migration situation, were at one time whole people with complete lives, now living in Canada, they are but one thing: refugees, and being a refugee almost certainly means trying to rebuild your life and the lives of your children in financial poverty. The evidence is of course overwhelming; families who are economically disadvantaged are going to experience greater challenges in raising their children than those who are free of such burdens.

Ensuring families have equitable access to social services that can help ease the burden of low socioeconomic status is one action the early childhood community of practice can take; I believe though, there is more we can do. Each of us as citizens has a responsibility to advocate on behalf of, not only refugees, but of all persons who are living in poverty or near poverty circumstances. Poverty is a social issue that does not go away by simply denying it exits or by donating financially to social service agencies so someone else can deal with "the issue." The issue belongs to all of us.

Dramatic changes are needed in the fabric of our society. Until we all take responsibility for making changes in our personal consumption-based life styles, there will always be those upon whose backs we climb in order to reach our position of "middle and upper class." Furthermore, we all have a role to play in making sure governments at all levels; federal, provincial, and municipal are held answerable to all citizens so that an opportunity to live life with dignity and in comfort is a possibility for everyone. Holding our governments accountable to providing refugees access to affordable housing, language services, education, job training opportunities, and for those with work qualifications and experience, a fair assessment of their capabilities; is everyone's responsibility.

Another issue that arises during resettlement is the "loss of extended family and community support" that was available when living "back home." Research participants spoke of not knowing how to raise their children without the help of their extended family and community. This lack of navigational support is especially felt when encountering the "unfamiliar parenting practices" of this new location, a related settlement issue. Now set adrift in a strange country, refugee parents find themselves awash in unfamiliar territory. They often-times struggle to maintain the practices that have for generations past allowed parents in their home country to instil in children the values and beliefs they deem essential.

The metaphor of an "adaptive adult" (Roer-Strier & Rosenthal, 2001; Roer-Strier & Strier, 2007) is used when considering the cultural basis of parenting practices, beliefs, values, and goals. All parents want their children to grow into "valued adults" (Quinn, 2005), the difficulty arises when the nature of that image, and the methods used to attain that ideal differs between members of a community. Parental self-efficacy, the feeling that as a parent I am able act and guide my child in ways that promote positive outcomes is shown to be a factor in both parental competence, and child adjustment (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001; Coleman & Karraker, 1998, 2000; Jones & Prinz, 2005). "To optimize parenting quality, mothers and fathers need to learn to have faith in their own abilities. Once parents internalize a sense of competency in the role, satisfaction and pleasure in parenting become attainable even under marginal ecological conditions" (Coleman & Karraker, 1998, p. 79).

I am convinced that what is needed is not more "parenting classes," but rather "parenting dialogue." Parenting is a difficult task no matter who you are and no matter where you live. Early learning and care centres can become major avenues for parents with diverse life experiences and backgrounds to meet and communicate about the challenges of parenting. It is not more instruction we need to provide, but rather a space for honest sharing.

Hand-in-hand with changes in childrearing practices, are shifts in the "roles and responsibilities of family members." Families constitute communities of practice, and are places where members gain knowledge and skills, feel a sense of belonging, find meaning for their lives, and form their identities (Wenger, 1998), and even in the most idyllic of settings, family constellations encounter challenges to this model. For refugee families, to be transplanted from the familiar elements of the sociocultural and historical circumstances in which their family had originally arisen, means certain disruption. Spouses may need to find new ways of relating if for example, familiar gender roles within their family community of practice differ from those of the wider community of practice outside their home. As well, the dynamics between siblings, and between children and parents shifts because of changing circumstances. While change is an inevitable aspect of human life and family systems, the suddenness of the change is what causes disorder for refugee families.

Early childhood communities of practice are places where families constellate, as such, the challenges being posed to families because of shifts in roles and responsibilities are going to be felt. Children do not attend early learning and care centres in isolation; they are the "boundary objects" or catalysts that signify whole families. Whole families in essence attend, not just the children enrolled. As such, the places where children gather ought to be the centre of community life. All family members, and all citizens should feel welcomed and integral to the spaces and places where young children dwell. The hope is that in these places refugee families can begin to find new ways of relating and can support one another during this time of transition.

Another significant issue for refugee families is the need to protect their children from "racism and discrimination." The point I wish to make is; there should be no need to "protect" children from racism and discrimination because there should be no racism and discrimination. Preschools and schools need to be purged of policies and practices that privilege "whiteness," and children become engaged in critical thinking that will inevitably lead to social transformation. It is not right to place upon the shoulders of the young the burden of changing society, teachers and administrators must lead the way in this project, at the same time however, we know from evidence related to environmental issues for example, and recycling in particular, that when children became alarmed, and took their message of "reduce, reuse, and recycle" home, people took action. Children are capable and competent citizens of our world, and do have a powerful impact on the direction society takes; the role of educators is to help children find and unleash their voices.

Refugee families, bereft of home, community, and family members, while also having endured hardships and trauma, will in many cases be dealing with "mental health issues" such as depression and other post traumatic stress related conditions. The children of such families, while perhaps having escaped the direct impact of war, may be affected secondarily by the resulting impact on their parents. This can place a burden on the institutions relied upon by refugee families. It is crucial that educators equip themselves with knowledge related to helping children from such conditions. Early childhood communities of practice, if truly welcoming, safe, and nurturing environments, can play a considerable role in helping refugee families heal.

Having refugee children and their parents feel "truly welcomed and safe" in the new communities of practice they encounter, requires they find support for "maintaining their home language and culture." This issue frustrates and saddens refugee parents. They want their children to "fit in" and "do well" in Canada, but at the same time they know they can only maintain close connections with their children if they are able to communicate deeply with one another in a common language. For parents, even if they acquire functional English, the expression of their deep cultural values and beliefs will always be more comfortably done in the language of their heart, their home language. If we want refugee families to become strong and vibrant members of Canadian society, there needs to be due emphasis placed on helping families maintain their indigenous languages. In this I do not mean simply "telling" newcomers of this importance, but actively finding ways of allowing newcomer parents and children to use and share their home language in public places. If we are indeed a multicultural country then every language of the world ought to be heard and spoken with pride in our midst as we live, learn, and relate together. Schools and preschool settings can help in this regard by welcoming the use of home languages alongside the use of English, and in developing resources that promote multilingualism.

Schools and preschool settings are vital in the maintenance of home language and culture, and in the overall adjustment of refugee families to life in Canada. Families "adapting to the Canadian education system" are in essence adapting to life in Canada. The institutions children are associated with have a fundamental influence on their identity. As children acquire cultural knowledge through their involvement in schools and preschools, parents will quickly find themselves alienated from their child's new world if ways of connecting to these institutions are not forged.

Developing ways of welcoming parents into the enterprise of schooling, and school preparation are critical to helping refugee families feel welcome in Canada. By this, I do not simply mean a one-sided approach where the dominant cultural values and pedagogy are dispatched to newcomers, but a true dialogue about the beliefs, values, and goals we all wish for our children.

The settlement agency serving as the research site for Phase 2, and in particular the Parenting and Family Literacy Program offered at the agency, represent a community of practice that is working to address the settlement issues of refugee parents and children in the ways and means suggested above. The agency and individuals associated with it advocate for the human rights of all people, and are committed to working towards the equitable inclusion of newcomers in all aspects of community life in Edmonton. The agency has also taken practical steps to help ameliorate some of the economic challenges newcomer families must overcome by offering transitional housing, job placement services, and education bridging programs to immigrant professionals.

The most palpable element of the settlement agency community of practice is the welcoming atmosphere. It is very much the hub of community life for many ethnocultural groups. This fact is most evident in the programs and services offered to families. The Parenting and Family Literacy Program seeks to provide a community where parents and children gather to do much more than develop literacy in English. The knowledge and experience of all members is brought forth with the aim of providing support to one another. The challenges of parenting are shared honestly and openly by staff and clients alike. That "right answers" and "best ways" are illusive is acknowledged, while at the same time making clear that children are deserving of respectful and non-harming guidance and discipline. The parenting and family literacy community of practice becomes a place where new roles and ways of being in the world are tested and refined, and people see they are worthy of dignity and respect irrespective of race and creed. The safety and comfort of the community along with the intervention of professional expertise, offers opportunities for healing from past and ongoing traumas.

One very practical offering of the Parenting and Family Literacy Program is the development of resources that are made available to families as tools to use with their children to help retain their home language. Folk tales recorded in the home languages of the families as well as English are freely made available. The development of these materials has, and continues to be, an activity that draws many people from within and outside of the agency into partnership. As well, the job of helping refugee parents and children adapt to the Canadian education system is approached as an endeavour involving many individuals and communities. Education brokers, who share the same cultural and linguistic background as newcomers, intercede on their behalf as change agents in schools and preschools around the city. The message brought is that change is not a one-sided endeavour. Newcomers can do their part to work towards a better understanding of school norms in Canada, at the same time however; educators must do their part to examine the assumptions behind the pedagogical practices that dominate schools and preschool settings.

Phase 2 of this research contributes to building an intercultural exchange of ideas that point towards a common understanding of what pedagogical practices can support refugee families in maintaining the values, beliefs, and goals they hold for their children. I believe the results also bring a new consciousness to the field of early care and education that will benefit all children, not just refugee children. An appreciation for "intersubjectivity" (Smagorinsky, 1995), a belief that knowledge and being arise in the meeting between subjects, in this case refugee families and the early childhood community of practice, holds promise as a means of coming to understand the other's thinking and values.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice Implications

In the observations of three Sudanese mothers and their preschool sons utilizing typical developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice artefacts, wooden building blocks, distinct ways of being with each other and of using the materials arise. Some of these ways are in stark contrast to the ways three early childhood educators use the same materials to guide and mediate the learning of these same three boys.

School readiness, child centred practice, the primacy of linguistic development, and hands-on manipulation of materials; all hallmarks of developmentally appropriate practice are evident in the ways the early childhood educators mediate the learning of the Sudanese boys. The mothers, in contrast set their attention to the task at hand, building, with seeming little thought given to "teaching" their children concepts through the use of the blocks; the task is not about learning colour, size, shape, number, etc, the task is about building. If there is something to be learned or reinforced in the way the three Sudanese mothers use the materials, it is the value of "being present."

It seems in our zeal for school readiness we tend to lose focus of the moment, the being together, the mindfulness. Fromm (2005) describes two kinds of cultures, "being" cultures, and "having" cultures. "Optimum knowledge in the being mode is *to know more deeply*. In the having mode it is *to have more knowledge*" (emphasis in original, p. 34). Ours is a having culture, and developmentally appropriate practice is designed to facilitate this having. Children need to have all the right skills and concepts mastered, the right vocabulary, and pronunciation, in order to "graduate" to the next level of knowledge acquisition. Childhood is continually a process of acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to advance to the next level, with adulthood, as prescribed in specific terms, being the ultimate in having arrived.

Cohen and Bai (2004) speak of "educating the heart," and of the consummate value of education being to foster human values. They rouse educators to resist the "vociferous, ever-encroaching instrumentalist, economic, technocratic ideals" of today's society and create conditions that "will allow the emergence of what is quintessentially human; people who are relational, compassionate, peace-loving, world-loving, and competently caring" (p. 18). To do so entails that educators look inward to find and cultivate in themselves those ideals. If we are but "talking heads," so too will this be to what our students aspire. If we desire our students to develop human values, then as teachers we must become "heart-fully human."

I agree with Cohen and Bai (2004); reaching from human heart to human heart is the ultimate aim of life, and as we encounter the other, it is in the "inter-subjective space" created between us that true human relationality arises. A parent participant from the Phase 1 research articulates the perceived tension between what

"Western" education emphasizes and what many African parents value, "The only thing children get from education here is knowledge but not good behaviour or respect." While at the same time, newcomer parents repeatedly tell me they want their children to do well at school, "School is important. We hope they can get good jobs, become teachers, doctors." Steering the course between indigenous values and practices and the values and practices that will see newcomer children are "successful" in Canada is not easy. Only when we are able to dialogue about these tensions will newcomers begin to feel they have a place in the early childhood community of practice. Unfortunately, we tend to recoil from the angst associated with such tensions, and newcomers to the early childhood community of practice are denied the opportunity to bring their marginalized voices to the discussion. Too often newcomers are perceived as deficient and in need of intervention designed to teach them developmentally appropriate ways of interacting with their children. What they have to bring to the dialogue about teaching, learning, and being in the world with young children is lost.

The development of a "sense of consonance" or harmony (Smagorinsky, 1995) between refugees and the early childhood community of practice, by acknowledging the complexities of human change and learning, has the potential to lead to a shared "telos" or pathway to mediating refugee children's learning. "When there is little or no congruence between formal instruction and students' prior culturally fostered tool use, and when teachers make no effort to engage in a reciprocal relationship with students regarding appropriate tool use, then instruction will fail" (p. 204). A movement away from the conformity of developmentally appropriate practice in the direction of "heterogeneity" will allow all individuals, not just refugees, to develop a number of frameworks for thinking and learning.

Wenger (1998) speaks of education as not merely formative, but transformative. Schools and preschools ought to be sites where identities are explored and a sense of being and belonging arises. If this is to be the case for refugee families, then the Eurocentric nature of education policies and practices need to be addressed (Dei & Calliste, 2000; Trifonas, 2003). We have to learn to welcome the multiple ways of knowing and being children bring to the classroom. Dei, et al. (2000), propose a "multicentred" framework where "monoculturalism" is challenged, and marginalized knowledges become integral to classroom life. The developmentally appropriate early childhood community of practice must make way for newcomers.

Mediated learning, from the Vygotskian perspective, involves a more expert member of a dyad, usually an adult or older peer, entering the zone of proximal development of a younger or less experienced person, and in various ways scaffolding that persons learning. In returning to the characteristics of mediated learning as outlined by Juliebo (1985), we see that sharing, intentionality and reciprocity, transcendence, meaning, regulation, and competence, if universal, are differently manifested depending on the values held by the adult mediator.

For the mothers and sons it is the "task" of building that is "shared," whereas for the early childhood educators, the "sharing" is around concept formation, cognitive, linguistic and social development. The "intentionality and reciprocity" inherent in mediated learning is evident, here again however, the nature of what is expected of the children differs greatly between the mothers and the early childhood educators. The dominant intention of the interactions between mothers and sons is the maintenance and reinforcement of child to adult respect. Between the early childhood educators and the children the intentionality and reciprocity is focused on skill and knowledge acquisition, and from a values perspective, independence, self-motivation, and problem solving. "Transcendence;" bringing the child into more complex understandings is greatly reinforced by the early childhood educators through the use of praise as each of the boys provides the requested information or performs the sought after task. For the mothers, the use of non-verbal reinforcements, gestures and physical touch, are used to bring greater understanding and compliance with respect to values such as respect, rather than self-initiatory success or knowledge attainment.

Whether the block building task was "meaningful and appropriate" to the child differs among the three children. For Chata, the child who has lived in Canada the longest, and has had the most exposure to developmentally appropriate practice, the task appeared meaningful and appropriate in the situations with the early childhood educators. With his mother, there was less fitness of purpose. I suggest this was due to the transitional phase of the mother. Chata was clear on the purpose and meaning of building with blocks, Nyakesha however is caught between two worlds. We see her trying to use the opportunity to reinforce the value of respect, while at the same time foraying into the terrain of knowledge acquisition and the promotion of values such as independence and self-initiation.

"Regulation" of pace and flow of the activity we see firmly in the hands of the two mothers newest to Canada, they are in control of the activity; here again with Chata, we see a shift, he holds the power position with respect to the activity. The three early childhood educators are the most in tune with Chata; he and they are in the flow of developmentally appropriate practice. Keon, having been in Canada only six months, defies being brought into the intentions of developmentally appropriate practice. He sets his own agenda. Razi I perceive as a frustration, and perhaps a disappointment to the early childhood educators. They know he possesses the linguistic and cognitive competence to perform the activity in keeping with developmentally appropriate practice expectations; he however is bringing an orientation to the task that is foreign to the early childhood educators involved with him.

The "competence" factor relating to mediated learning deserves special attention. Were the mothers competent users of the materials? At the outset of the activity, no they were not, very quickly though they did acquire facility with the blocks. Were any of the mothers competent to perform according to developmentally appropriate practice expectations? No they were not. This however does not translate into "incompetence." I know all three parents observed want their children to learn, grow, and become adaptive, valued adults. Not having had exposure to early childhood materials and experiences considered essential from the developmentally appropriate practice perspective does not mean the parents are incapable of mediating their children's learning. It is important to the successful integration of refugees into the early childhood community of practice that we open our eyes to see the competencies refugee parents possess and when we see interactions that do not fit with developmentally appropriate practice, that we step back and try to ascertain the meaning behind the strategies employed by the parents. It is only through non-judgmental seeing and relating that together we can grow in understanding.

One of the specific differences between the guidance and mediation strategies used by the mothers and the early childhood educators is related to language. We see the various people involved bringing a "multiplicity of voices" to the task (Wertsch, 1991). In the case of the mothers, their voice is largely non-verbal. The use of gesture, physical touch, and modeling are the primary forms of guidance and mediation. With the early childhood educators, verbal interaction in the form of question and answer, and praise are the prime mediators. In the three children, we witness a progression from almost complete non-awareness of these verbal strategies, as is the case of Keon, to Razi who somewhat tentatively enters into alignment with these techniques, and finally Chata, who is completely on board with the developmentally appropriate practice use of verbal mediation.

The work of engaging, imagining, and aligning (Wenger, 1998) with developmentally appropriate practice is something mothers and children both must do. Nyabelung seems unaware that the point of the exercise is to do something together with her child; following the child's lead, learning through play, and child centred practice are not in her field of influence; she is far from the process of engaging, imagining, and aligning to developmentally appropriate practice, and so is her son. Nyalah and Razi present a way of being together that challenges developmentally appropriate practice. While Nyakesha stumbles to keep pace with the level of engagement her son displays.

While the results reported here are limited by the small sample of three Sudanese mothers and their sons, and three early childhood educators, the evidence supports the view that further opportunities to observe the guidance and mediation strategies used with preschool refugee children is an area that will bring rich insight. There is evidence to support the view that for the Sudanese refugee mothers involved, guiding and mediating their sons' value formation, more than cognitive formation is the focus. The reinforcing of values too is part of developmentally appropriate practice, the values sought however may be in contrast to those the family wishes to impart. Rather than promoting respectful, quiet, and observational interactions, such as those desired by the two Sudanese mothers newest to Canada, we see the early childhood educators reinforcing independence, self-initiation, and hands-on interactions.

Göncü (1999), in describing children's engagement with the world, refers to the economic, social, physical, and value systems that influence what activities are made available to children. We know many of the activities common to North American born children are new to both the parents and children of refugee families. This does not necessarily mean the children of refugee families have been bereft of activities. It does mean though that the activities refugee children will have been exposed to will be different from what we might expect. There is need for continued research to determine what activities have in the past, and continue to be made available to refugee children within their home and ethnocultural communities of practice. Looking for the knowledge and skills children acquire through activities outside the developmentally appropriate practice limitations will enlighten our knowledge about refugee children, as well as provide opportunities to widen the activities offered to all children. Of paramount importance in seeking to learn from the engagement of refugee children in culturally specific activities, is uncovering the values and beliefs about children and childhood inherent in those activities. By opening our eyes to see things differently arranged, we also shine light on our own ways of doing things. Newcomers to the early childhood community of practice can bring us much needed insight. Some recent works exploring the experiences and voices of immigrant children contribute to our knowing (Adams & Kirova, 2007; Knörr, 2005), still, a great deal more waits to be considered.

Bar-Yosef (2001) reminds us that for "majority culture" children, life at home and in the community is complementary of the preschool and school experience. This is not the case for many newcomers. For refugee families in particular, their past and present experiences may not have prepared them for Canadian "school success." This does not mean they are incapable. If schools and preschools can find ways for refugee children and their families to bring their skills and competencies to the classroom community of practice, all will benefit. When their indigenous knowledges are esteemed, newcomers move from the periphery to the centre of a community of practice, and in so doing feel a sense of belonging. Only in belonging, can one derive meaning and purpose in the schooling endeavour. Refugee children and parents, as whole people with value, dignity, worth, and knowledge have much to offer the early childhood community of practice.

There are no "right answers" to this quest, only critical questions. The questioning, problematizing, deconstructing, and reconceptualizing of early childhood pedagogy is the first step in a helpful direction, along with looking to other people, places, and times, for alternative ways of living, being, teaching and learning. Most essential is cultivating a desire to look inward and encourage the core human values of the heart to arise and connect with the children and parents who come our way.

Postscript

In undertaking the writing of this dissertation, I had committed to remain physically and emotionally healthy, and to come out at the end still being liked by my son and still liking myself. I am pleased to report that for the most part, these goals were met. This is due in no small part to the reading and contemplation of non-academic material along the way. It is here that I wish to pay tribute to those influences.

To begin, to set out with my son from "The Shire," and undertake the most amazing journey of any hobbit or human's life has left an indelible mark. Tolkien (1991a), in describing Frodo's reaction upon first hearing the Elves singing in Rivendell writes,

> At first the beauty of the melodies and of the interwoven words in elventongues, even though he understood them little, held him in a spell, as soon as he began to attend to them. Almost it seemed that the words took shape, and visions of far lands and bright things that he had never yet imagined opened out before him; and the firelit hall became like a golden mist above seas of foam that sighed upon the margins of the world. (p. 227)

My wish is that as a people we might stop to hear the "sighs upon the margins of the world;" the things spoken and unspoken that come to us by way of those new to our country and to our communities of practice.

Too often however, the sighs are not heard. In writing about the experience of teaching English to newcomers, Hart (2002) writes about the squeaky wheels of the wealthy and middle-class students that are heard to the dissolution of minority students.

> Poor students and ones with foreign accents rarely squeak in a way that can be heard by the powerful. In part that's because the powerless know a certain fact much better than the rest of us: a squeak can get you stomped on. (p. 24)

I trust the "squeaks" from the margins might be brought safely to the centre in some small way by this project.

There have been several novels set in "refugee countries" as well as novels written by refugees now living the process of resettlement that have served to bring insight to my knowing about the lived experiences of refugee families (Caputo, 2005; Fuller, 2001; Gibb, 2005; Hosseini, 2004; Huntley, 2003; Khadra & Cullen, 2004; Moravec, 1997; Shriver, 2007). The individual stories, each distinct in my memory, also meld together and reside at the centre of my being. I picture these lives of people I have never met, as running a course, like a river, flowing within me; their stories and experiences will forever be part of my flow in this world.

I can however, never truly know the experience of another. Lowry (1993) explores this feeling when, Jonas, in *The Giver*, now poised to become the "receiver of memories" begins to realize his friends will never again be able to relate to who he is and what he knows.

> He was very aware of his own admonition not to discuss his training. But it would have been impossible, anyway. There was no way to describe to his friends what he had experienced there in the Annex room. How could you describe a sled without describing a hill and snow; and how could you

> describe a hill and snow to someone who had never felt height or wind or that feathery, magical cold? Even trained for years as they all had been in precision of language, what words could you use which would give another the experience of sunshine? (p. 89)

Though not sharing a similar past, I anticipate as refugee newcomers enter our midst that together we might form mutual memories that bond us together in our knowing.

On a somewhat different note, the reading I have done in the area of "slowness" (Andrews, 2006; Honoré, 2004) together with the writing of Deng Ming-Dao (1993) cause me to wonder what has gone wrong with our society. Why is it that we are all so hurried and disconnected? Such authors offer us an image of being with the other, the self, and the universe in ways that bring harmony and peace rather than discord and competition.

I see encounters with refugees and immigrants, as an opportunity to look for other expressions of being in the world. If you look carefully, you can tell a Sudanese woman by her walk. She gives the impression of not being given over to rushing to the next activity; she is walking. This is all she can be doing at this moment, simply walking. Others coming to us from around the world, offer the chance to reconsider how we live, work, and relate. I ask that we might accept this gift with gratitude.

There are of course readings about education that have brought an alternative perspective. Not the least of which has been Daniel Quinn's provocative writing (1992, 1997). In reflecting on the journey that led to the creation of *Ishmael*, Quinn shares his views regarding children and childhood in North America today. He writes about preschool children:

> They learn four fifths of the vocabulary they'll use in their everyday activities for the rest of their lives. They easily learn to walk, run, skip, swim, ride a bicycle, draw, print, count, and hundreds of other things they'll do for the rest of their lives. (1995, pp. 118-119)

Unfortunately, when children reach school age (and now with the advent of "Early Head Start" even earlier) they oftentimes lose their zeal for learning. The children are not to blame for this, schools are the problem Quinn points out; "There can't be *good* ways of teaching something, there has to be a *right* way – one and only way, with all other ways *wrong*" (emphasis in original, p. 103). The "right way" mentality means children have to be convinced and cajoled into doing something that at one time came naturally and joyfully. Quinn insists that learning takes place when children are ready and wanting to learn, and this requires flexibility and diversity of time, space, materials, and opportunities. He refers to a time when children learned by being with others, immersed in real life activities, and wonders if we might somehow reclaim some of that way. He suggests that it is not a school that a child needs, but rather a city (I would substitute, a community).

> It's a place where people live who are willing to let their children have access to them. People who are willing to let the children of the community hang around, willing to pay attention to them, willing to talk to them, willing to show them how things work, willing to show them how to do things, willing to let them try out things for themselves. Nothing difficult, nothing very demanding, just the ordinary things people did on this planet for the first three million years of human life. (pp. 124-125)

In rethinking developmentally appropriate practice, there is wisdom in reacquiring practices of apprenticeship, mentorship, and living life simply as it arises in its naturalness.

Finally, to come full circle and end where we began, with Tolkien (1991b); Gandalf, in his wisdom offers this advice during "The Last Debate."

> Other evils there are that may come; for Sauron is himself but a servant or emissary. Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule. (p. 861)

For newcomers entering early childhood communities of practice in this country I will continue doing what I can so that you might have clean earth to till; I wish you fair weather.

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Appendix - Video Transcriptions

Mothers and Sons

Nyabelung and Keon

Nyabelung	Keon
Nyabelung sits at the chair closest to the blocks.	Keon walks directly over to examine the video camera.

I encourage Keon to sit in the empty chair at the table.

Nyabelung says something to Keon in Nuer and straightens his shirt as he sits down.	Keon sits smiling and looking into the video camera.
There are four blocks in front of Nyabelung that have spilled out of the box of blocks to her right; a neutral arch, a red cylinder, a red rectangle and a green cube. The arch and cylinder are standing vertically beside each other but not touching. She brings the arch and the cylinder into alignment with each other with the sides touching, then reaches over and turns the red rectangle so it can be placed vertically beside the cylinder and arch. She now has a row of three vertically standing blocks. She reaches over to the pile of blocks beside her and selects a red rectangle that she places vertically into the row of blocks in front of her. She quickly removes the arch and the cylinder, goes back to the pile of blocks, and selects another red rectangle that she stands vertically and adds to the line. She reaches for another rectangle, orange this time, she starts to bring it to the collection in front of her then sets it back in the pile of blocks and selects a red cube, sets it down, then finds a red rectangle, picks up the cube and rectangle both in one hand and sets them in the line up of blocks. She now has a row of five vertically standing alternating taller and shorter red blocks.	Keon continues to smile and look at the video camera until noticing the row of five red blocks his mother has in front of her. He leans over to be closer to the blocks; his hand is very near to the row of vertical blocks his mother has arranged.
Nyabelung has her left hand on the table between Keon's hand and the row of	While saying something in Nuer, Keon tries to reach across the structure his

blocks, in a way that prevents him from knocking over the blocks. She flicks her hand against his as he rests it close to the blocks.	mother has made to get some blocks.
Nyabelung places her arm between Keon and the blocks and brushes his reaching hand away.	Keon leans away from the table, sits back down on the chair and again smiles, giggles, and looks into the video camera.
Nyabelung continues adding alternating short and tall red blocks to the row of blocks in front of her.	Keon notices the microphone on the corner of the table opposite to where he is sitting. He gets up from the table and goes to pick up the microphone.
Nyabelung has picked up the neutral arch she had earlier discarded and attempts to place it on top of two tall blocks at the end of the row of blocks. She realizes there is a discrepancy in height between the two blocks and that the arch will not balance on top. She adds another red block on to the end then shifts the arch to try placing it on top of two other blocks in the row. These blocks are the same height and the arch balances on top of them, but with little support.	After being intercepted by me, Keon returns to the table and reaches quickly across his mother to pick up a yellow rectangular block. He tries to place it on top of the arch his mother has placed. While saying something in Nuer, she pulls the block out of his hand. He sits back and draws his chair up to the table, watching with his hands folded on the table as his mother builds.
Nyabelung takes the yellow block she had removed from Keon's hand and lifting up the arch, places it horizontally across the two vertical blocks then adds the arch on top. She makes a second row of vertical blocks paralleling the first row, then places blocks horizontally between the tops of the two vertical lines of blocks. She has created a structure that can be described as two "walls" and a "roof."	Keon sits looking into the video camera then looks around the room before coming back to look at what his mother is doing with the blocks. When he takes notice of the structure in front of Nyabelung, he leans into the table, his body up off the chair, and watches. He vocalizes something as he leans in to watch. He keeps his arms folded in front of him.
Nyabelung continues to add blocks to her basic structure to increase it in size and detail. There is a repeating pattern of vertical pillars with horizontal arches placed across the tops of the pillars. She says something to Keon in Nuer when he reaches out to touch the structure she is working on.	Keon sets his gaze at something beyond the video camera. He hears the blocks knocking against one another as Nyabelung searches for the right ones, and his attention is brought back to the table. He reaches out to touch the structure his mother has built. He draws his hand back when Nyabelung says something in Nuer. He rests his head in both his hands, then rubs his head with one hand, gazes at the video camera then gets up from the table. He walks over to

	the door where there is a window looking out into the hallway.
Nyabelung continues building in the same manner. She glances to her side and notices that Keon has left the table and is standing at the door.	Keon looks out the window for a while then returns to sit at the table. He looks into the video camera for a moment then returns to the door where he plays with the doorknob.
Nyabelung again glances over to see that Keon is standing at the door then returns to her building project.	Keon comes to stand behind the video camera and can see his mother as she is building. He laughs.

I encourage Keon to return to the table.

Nyabelung glances up once to see Keon behind the video camera then returns to her building.	Keon comes around to the front of the video camera and looks in. He walks back to the table, then back again to the video camera, all the while, talking, laughing, and pointing at the video camera.
The space in front of Nyabelung is completely taken up with her building. She reaches over to the empty space in front of Keon's chair and begins another structure. She has two rectangles in her hand that she first sets down vertically then changes to lay them down horizontally then places one rectangle vertically on top and then two more blocks horizontally beside the first set. She adds vertical blocks then a horizontal one across the top. She adds another vertical to the first structure then a horizontal across the top to create two structures that mirror each other. She then places a series of blocks horizontally across the two structures to create two walls with a flat roof over the top. She then tops the roof off with another horizontal block placed perpendicular to the first row of roof blocks. Finally, she places blocks vertically between the two walls at both ends of the structure that resemble "doors" before returning to her first structure.	Keon is away from the table, exploring the room, during this time.
Nyabelung seems to contemplate adding a block to her first structure then thinks	Keon returns to the side of the table where, while standing, he places his

otherwise and stands up in order to reach the empty space on the table in front of her first structure. She stacks two cubes on top of one another in front of the large structure and begins building a third structure.	elbows on the table and leans towards the large structure in front of Nyabelung. He reaches to touch one of the blocks then draws his hand back. He reaches out to touch the two cubes then draws his hand back. He reaches to touch the smaller second structure.
Nyabelung says something in Nuer.	Keon backs away from the table.
Nyabelung straightens up the smaller structure.	Keon goes around to the chair side of the table and sits down.
Nyabelung says something while shaking her finger at Keon.	Keon smiles at the video camera, sits briefly in his chair, looks at his mom, shrugs his shoulders, smiles at the video camera (or me) then gets up to wander around the room.
Still standing, Nyabelung adds blocks to the cubes she has placed in front of the largest structure. She goes to sit back down, brushes up against the large structure, and sends about one third of the structure crashing to the table.	Keon sees and hears the blocks falling, says something in Nuer, and giggles.
Nyabelung seems to consider repairing the structure then chooses to knock the rest of the building down. She glances at the completed structure to her left before beginning to rebuild the structure she knocked over. As with the small structure in front of Keon's chair, she begins with two horizontal blocks with vertical blocks on top. She is careful to select only cubes that she stacks in twos to form "pillars." On top of each set of two pillars, she places a long horizontal block. She now has two walls that she spaces equally apart by laying two horizontal blocks down on the table at either end of the two walls.	Keon wanders back to the table, notices the pictures of block structures on the side of the box of blocks, and leans on the table to examine them closer. Because of how the box is situated, the picture is oriented sideways. He says something while looking at the side of the box, and then returns to look at his mother through the video camera.
Nyabelung adds two arches spanning the two walls then leans back to look at her work. She seems to decide the structure is complete and brushes some blocks away so she can begin to build another structure. The procedure is the same as described above, a series of pillars and horizontal blocks forming two walls.	Keon returns to lean on the front of the table and watch Nyabelung build. He fingers a couple of loose blocks in front of him then goes to sit down, eying the structure in front of his chair.
Nyabelung stands up and continues to	Keon touches the structure in front of

add blocks to the structure in front of her.	him and knocks it over. He glances sideways to see his mother's reaction then reaches over to add a block to the large structure in the centre of the table.
Nyabelung seems to take no notice of the structure in front of Keon being knocked over but sees him reaching to add a block to the large structure in the centre of the table. As she begins to say something, the structure is knocked down by Keon's actions.	Keon quickly withdraws his hand, leans away, and then leaves the table.
Nyabelung picks up the blocks that have fallen to the floor, sits back down, knocks down the rest of the structure, sweeps the blocks out of the way to create a clear space to work, and then begins to rebuild. In the process, her elbow brushes up against the building on her right and knocks a portion of it down. She seems dissatisfied with what she has started with her present structure; she knocks it down and starts again. She finishes this building by placing triangles on top of the pillar walls. She then returns to building on the structure to her right that had been knocked by her elbow. She places an angled roof on top of the two walls before her purse brushes up against the structure and sends part of it tumbling down.	Keon does not return to the table.

End

Nyalah and Razi

Nyalah	Razi
When Razi and Nyalah enter the room Nyalah takes the chair closest to the blocks. She is wearing a bulky jacket and is carrying a purse. She appears to be struggling to sit at the low table and chairs while managing these items. She is seven months pregnant, which likely adds to the need to make adjustments in order to be comfortable. I invite her to take her jacket off, which she does.	Razi is sitting at the chair further away from the box of blocks. He is holding a block that has spilled out of the box within easy reach of where he is seated. He then reaches over to the rest of the blocks and retrieves another. He stacks them vertically one on top of the other while his mother is getting her jacket off.

I invite them to, "Do whatever you would like with the blocks."

Nyalah says something to Razi in Dinka then first passes him a few blocks one at a time then uses her arm to push several blocks over to his side of the table.	Razi eagerly accepts the blocks and helps to gather them to in front of where he is seated.

They proceed to build independent structures.

Nyalah spends a few seconds manipulating the blocks in front of her before placing one rectangular block vertically on to the table. She then quickly lays it down and stacks it upon another horizontally placed rectangle. She glances over at Razi. She picks up an arch-shaped block then casts it aside. She then manipulates three triangles by sliding them around on the table in front of her. She tries to get two triangles to stack in such a way as to form a cube.	Razi very quickly begins to stack blocks vertically one top of one another into what would be considered a "tower structure." He casts his eyes about the room a few times, taking in the recording equipment. He says something to Nyalah in Dinka. As he proceeds to build, he glances towards his mother six times in quick succession. During his final glance, he reaches towards the blocks in front of Nyalah to seemingly take one; he thinks otherwise and selects one of the blocks in front of his own self.
Nyalah seems to sense Razi sending her sideways glances; she smiles, says something in Dinka, then reaches over and incorporates four blocks into his structure. Her way of adding to his structure is to lay rectangular blocks lengthwise along the sides of his "tower structure." She then returns to her own building.	Razi again glances up at the video camera and then his mother's structure before returning to his own building. At this point, he seems to be using his peripheral vision to keep a constant look out on what Nyalah is doing. Razi says something in Dinka and Nyalah reaches over and places a few blocks into Razi's structure.
Nyalah proceeds to select mainly cubes to build a long low structure with a wide	Razi, as he reaches for another block after once again glancing around the room and

opening at one end resembling a "horseshoe shape." She is very deliberate in the way she selects and places each of the blocks. Only rectangular blocks, pillars, and cubes are used with the exception of two or three triangles that are placed on top of the structure. Blocks that she rejects are slid over to where Razi can reach them. Nyalah works with intensity and appears to have something in mind that she wishes to construct. Nyalah later tells me that the structure is a "fence." I am also informed that women often contributed to building projects "back home" and that Nyalah's husband was a builder by trade both in Sudan and Egypt.	at his mother's building, brushes against part of his structure and knocks some blocks to the floor. Nyalah appears to take no notice of this, and continues with her building as Razi quickly retrieves the blocks from the floor. He glances towards the video camera as he does this. He rapidly rebuilds the tower that fell then starts straightening and neatening the structure he has made. He adds another vertical block then glances at what his mother is building. He reaches for the remaining three blocks that are easily within his reach. He hesitates and spends a few seconds looking at Nyalah's structure. He asks something in Dinka and she responds. Razi adds a few more blocks then watches his mother build, he adds one more block then seems distracted by the elements in the room. He has also run out of blocks within easy reach of himself. He says something to Nyalah but she offers no response. He sits watching, as he no longer has easy access to any blocks. He then stands up to reach across Nyalah to get some blocks, she responds by sweeping a handful of blocks to his side of the table. Razi continues to build a series of tall structures, all interconnected. He has now situated himself so he can easily see what Nyalah is doing as he continues to build.
In her building Nyalah has selected a block that seems to not fit with what she is doing, she slides it over to Razi's side of the table.	Razi makes a humming sound, tries to neaten up his structure and in so doing knocks two thirds of the structure to the floor.
Nyalah smiles and laughs in notice and continues with her own building.	Razi looks to the video camera then proceeds to retrieve the blocks from the floor. He then carefully dismantles the remaining tower, block by block. He spreads the blocks out slightly then begins to rebuild. He now lays the blocks horizontally one on top of the other rather than vertically. He glances towards his mother's building then begins again to add vertical blocks. He surrounds his

	tower with a "platform" of blocks. A second tall structure is added to the platform.
Nyalah sweeps some more blocks to Razi's side of the table.	Razi eagerly adds another block to the central tower structure then removes a layer of vertical blocks from the secondary tower before again glancing at his mother's building. He removes several blocks from both towers, two of them falling to the floor. He takes down the remaining blocks and begins again.
Nyalah slides two more blocks Razi's way.	Razi now has a large number of blocks in front of him and no visible structure.
Nyalah has a very meticulously created open-ended horseshoe shaped structure in front of her.	Razi casts his eyes around the room as he sets to building again. After a few attempts at tall structures that have fallen down he is now left with a low stack of blocks in front of him.
Nyalah looks to her side, sees Razi starting over, and reaches to help. She places a block horizontally upon another and slides them next to a stack of blocks Razi has made. Nyalah proceeds to add two lines of blocks in front of his structure. These begin to resemble the horseshoe structure that she has built. She continues to add to his structure until all the blocks in front of him are used.	Razi places his hands at his sides and watches as his mother begins to add to his structure.
	Razi places a block at the end of the two lines of blocks his mother has added in an attempt to close off the end of the horseshoe structure.
Nyalah moves the block to open the end.	
	Razi again closes it off.
Nyalah opens it.	
	Razi complies and leaves the block as Nyalah had placed it.

End

Nyakesha and Chata

Nyakesha	Chata
Nyakesha sits at the chair further away from the blocks.	Chata enters the room and walks over to examine the video camera.
In a combination of English and Nuer, Nyakesha calls Chata to come and sit at the table.	On his way to the table, Chata sees the box of blocks and stops to look at the pictures of block constructions on the side of the box.

Once Chata is seated at the table I ask, "What are you going to make?"

Nyakesha adjusts her headscarf before looking over to see what Chata is doing with the blocks.	Chata, now seated closest to the blocks, quickly stacks three cubes one on top of the other then criss-crosses two rectangles on top of the cubes. He contemplates placing a third rectangle on top, then changes his mind and takes the structure down.
Nyakesha watches and asks, "Are you making a house?"	Chata's response is not clear as he arranges a lever and catapults a cube across the table.

Both Nyakesha and Chata look up at the video camera (or me).

Nyakesha says something, smiles, and laughs.	Chata repeats this catapult action and one of the blocks falls to the floor.
Nyakesha says, "Oh," smiles, and looks at the video camera (or me).	Chata goes down onto the floor to retrieve the fallen block. While down on the floor he looks at the pictures of block structures on the side of the box. He turns his head sideways in order to see the pictures the right way up.
Nyakesha speaks to Chata and watches as he picks up the fallen block.	Chata returns to sit at the table and gazes at the video camera.
Nyakesha cleans Chata's face with her hand.	Chata pulls away and reaches for one of the blocks.
Nyakesha reaches across the table and pulls two handfuls of blocks towards her side of the table.	Chata stands up and using both hands sweeps all of the blocks out of the box and onto the table surface. He says, "Mama, let's make a castle."
Nyakesha says, "No let's make a house."	Chata says, "Ya" and takes the now empty box, lifts it up, points out the pictures of different shaped blocks, and says, while pointing to his head, "This one would be a head, and this would be a leg, and this a castle."

Nyakesha says, "Oh, I want to see," and reaches for the box.	Chata passes Nyakesha the box with the pictures upside down.
Nyakesha rotates the box so she can see the pictures upright.	Chata reaches for the box, saying, "No, no," while trying to turn the box upside down.
Nyakesha keeps a firm hold of the box. While placing her arm between Chata and the box, she places the box down on the table, saying, "Look."	Chata says, "Here, see, here's the castle."

The box is now on the table in front of where Nyakesha is seated, just out of arms reach of Chata; the blocks are located in a pile in front of Chata.

Nyakesha studies the picture.	Chata points to the picture, saying, "We need that one," and begins to select blocks.
Nyakesha clears a spot on the table beside the box for Chata to set down his blocks.	Chata sets down three rectangles horizontally one on top of the other.
After studying the picture, Nyakesha begins to select blocks from the pile of blocks in front of Chata.	Chata wants to keep adding blocks to his structure and has to reach over Nyakesha's arm in order to reach it.

They continue to reach across each other's arms to both gather and place their blocks. This reaching, placing and "jockeying" for position continues.

Nyakesha sings briefly while she begins to build.	Chata reaches across to point at the picture while saying something.
Nyakesha brushes Chata's arm out of the way.	Some blocks are knocked to the floor and Chata retrieves them.
Nyakesha, surveys what she has built saying, "Wow!"	Chata retrieves more blocks from the floor. When he returns to the table he looks at the video camera (or me) and says, "That thing is not working." He then asks what my name is.
Nyakesha laughs and says, "You know Darcey; she is your teacher."	After being reassured that the video camera is working, and he can have a look later, Chata returns to building.

They both spend time alternating looking at the picture on the side of the box and adding blocks to the structure between them.

	Chata makes another lever and catapults a block into the centre of the table then tries to place a block onto the structure in front of them.

Nyakesha says something.	Chata pulls his hand back and says in a high-pitched voice, "Okay!"
Nyakesha places a block.	Chata keeps trying to reach in to place blocks. More blocks fall to the floor and he retrieves them.
Nyakesha keeps pushing Chata's arm away.	Chata, know sounding frustrated, points at the picture, saying, "I want to make this one!"
Nyakesha sits back and looks at the picture, then points and says, "This one?"	Chata point and says, "No, this one," in an increasingly loud and high-pitched voice.
Nyakesha says, "Oh," and begins taking a row of blocks off the structure.	Chata watches.
Nyakesha places a block and asks, "This one?"	"Ya," Chata responds.
Nyakesha watches.	Chata adds another block and says, "Look at it, I made this one."
Nyakesha leans back and says, "Wow!"	Chata continues to alternate between pointing at the picture, saying "This one," and adding blocks.
Nyakesha adds a block then sits back in her chair.	Chata tries to place a block and in so doing knocks over the structure saying, "Oh no."
Nyakesha adds a block then sits back.	Chata picks up two blocks and starts knocking them together.
Nyakesha adds a block.	Chata tries to add the two blocks he was making noise with.
Nyakesha brushes his arm away saying, "Wrong way."	Chata keeps trying to reach in to see the picture or add blocks.
Nyakesha keeps her arm between Chata and the structure to block his access.	He bangs the blocks together then tries to place one of them.
Nyakesha brushes his arm away.	Chata points at the picture saying in a high-pitched voice, "No, no, no!"
Nyakesha laughs and says something that is not audible on the recording.	Chata again says, "No, no, no," and throws his arms up in the air. He then looks closely at the picture before turning his attention away from the building and back to the video camera.
Nyakesha adds blocks to the structure.	Chata finds a block that seems to match one on the box and brings it beside the picture for comparison. This leads to the construction of another lever and the catapulting of another block, this time onto his mother's lap.
Nyakesha passes Chata the block off her lap and continues building.	Chata goes to place a block saying, "Ya, ya, ya, we need this one."

Nyakesha studies the picture then removes the block Chata added and replaces it with a different one.	Chata has moved off to the side of the table and is engaged in gathering up some blocks and moving them closer to the structure. When he looks back at the structure he says, "Mama, you broke my thing."
Nyakesha reaches for more blocks.	Using both arms, Chata sweeps blocks closer to where Nyakesha can reach them, and then he leaves the table to explore the recording equipment.
Nyakesha says something in Nuer.	Chata looks at Nyakesha through the video camera.
Nyakesha smiles, laughs, and talks to Chata in Nuer.	Chata goes back to sit at the table.
Nyakesha takes her purse off her shoulder and gets up to go look at Chata through the video camera.	Chata tries to grab the sleeve of his mother's coat to prevent her from leaving the table.
Nyakesha says something in Nuer.	Chata stands behind the table and smiles.
Nyakesha returns to the table.	Chata leaves the table to look through the video camera.

End

Early Childhood Educators

Hannah and Keon

Hannah	Keon
Hannah is heard counting, "One, two, three, four," as she enters the room.	Keon saying something immediately runs, smiling, to the video camera.
Using the Nuer word for "come," Hannah calls Keon to the table.	Keon does not comply.
Hannah continues calling him in Nuer, while patting the table with her hand.	Keon does not comply.
Hannah walks over to where Keon is, takes him by the hand, and brings him to the table. She seats him at the chair further from the blocks, saying, "You want to take a picture with the car? Wow!"	Keon has a small car in one hand and a small fire truck in the other that he sets on the table.

I was later told vehicles were Keon's favourite play items at the time, and he insisted on bringing some with him to the taping. In all subsequent taping sessions, Keon and/or the accompanying adult brought toy cars with them.

Hannah says in a questioning voice, "You say one, two, three, four, where that car go?" as she pushes the cars along the table.	Keon focuses on the vehicles.
Hannah places some blocks down on the table in front of Keon saying, "Vroom, vroom, here, one, two, three, four, Keon." As she touches him on the shoulder and tries to draw him around to look at her she repeats, "Keon, Keon, Keon, Keon, look at me."	After "driving" the car on the table for a few moments, Keon turns his body towards Hannah.
While touching the blocks she has set on the table Hannah asks, "Where the car go?"	Keon says something as he makes a line of three blocks in front of him.
"Ya, one, two, three, four," Hannah says, and then repeats, "one, two, three," as she touches each of the blocks.	Keon says, "Four!"
"Four, you got it Keon!" Hannah says with enthusiasm.	Keon adds another block to the row he has started.
"One, say one," Hannah instructs.	"Two," Keon says.
"Two, where three?" Hannah asks.	Keon has set the cars onto the row of blocks.
In seeing what Keon has done Hannah remarks, "Oh ya, the cars go over the bridge."	Keon makes "vehicle noises" as he drives the fire truck along the row of blocks.

Hannah adds blocks to the row saying, "Vroom, Keon go over the bridge. Vroom, vroom."	Keon keeps driving along the lengthening row of blocks.
Hannah takes the car and makes vehicle noises as she drives on the table.	Keon continues driving and making vehicle noises.
Hannah neatens the row of blocks as she continues making vehicle noises.	Keon slides off his chair and then repositions himself.
Hannah assists Keon in adjusting his chair then offers, "Ya, good sitting." She then takes blocks from the "road" structure and places them in front of Keon saying, "Look here Keon."	Keon too reaches for some blocks from the road.
Hannah touches Keon's arm then points, saying, "Here, put this here," and again, "Here, put this here."	Keon stacks three pillars vertically one on top of the other.
"Ya, good job Keon, wow!" Hannah responds.	Keon says something.
"Ya, we put it on here," Hannah says as she points to the top block.	Keon adds a green rectangle.
"Oh, the green one goes on," Hannah says.	Keon adds a neutral arch vertically on top.
"Oh, wow, good," says Hannah while clapping.	Keon adds a second arch. He now has six blocks vertically stacked.
Hannah points her hand in the air while using the Nuer words for "up high."	Keon removes both arches then the green rectangle falls to the table. He picks it up and begins to create a row of horizontal blocks behind the fire truck.
Hannah watches as Keon makes a row with the blocks.	Keon pushes the row of blocks with the fire truck in front towards the edge of the table. The fire truck and all of the blocks except the one in his hand fall to the floor.
"Vroom, vroom, vroom," Hannah says while Keon is pushing the row of blocks. She cheers and claps when they fall to the floor.	Keon laughs.
Hannah motions with her hands towards the fallen blocks.	Keon goes down on the floor to retrieve the blocks.
"Ya, thank you, thank you Keon," Hannah responds to the blocks being picked up.	Keon returns to sitting and leans forward to examine the fire truck closely.
Hannah creates another row of blocks, all of uniform height. She calls Keon's attention to the row saying, "Keon, see," then by tapping on the last block, saying, "Here."	Keon looks up and places the car and then the fire truck on the row of blocks.

They both make vehicle noises as Keon drives and Hannah adds more blocks to the row.

"We're making a long bridge, ya," Hannah says.	Keon says something.
"Yes, we're making a long bridge, ya," Hannah repeats.	Keon says something.
"Ya, it's long," Hannah says as she gestures "long" by pulling her hands apart.	Keon adds blocks to the other end of the "bridge."
Hannah reaches across the table to add blocks at the other end of the row of blocks.	Keon slides one of the blocks out saying; "One, two, three," then slides it back in place.
"Wow, Keon, one, two, three, four, five, wow, Keon, good!" Hannah praises.	Keon straightens the row of blocks, looks up, and then points out the window behind the video camera.
"It's a car," Hannah remarks about what Keon is pointing to.	Keon says something.
"Ya, it's a car, you have a car," Hannah says, followed by "car" in Nuer.	Keon keeps driving his fire truck along the row of blocks while saying something.

They both drive making vehicle noises.

	Keon drops the fire truck off the end of the table.
Hannah claps and says, "Yea, the car falls down."	Keon gets up from the chair, picks up the fire truck, and pushes the car off the table. He then goes to look through the video camera.
Hannah calls him back to the table using the Nuer word for "come."	Keon comes back to the table with the fire truck in his hand.
Hannah thanks Keon for coming back to the table then places a row of vertical pillars on the table, saying, "See here."	Keon says something in a singsong voice.
Hannah says, "Ya, peek-a-boo, yes. Can you play peek-a-boo? Do you know peek-a-boo?" She places her hands over her eyes, then pats Keon on the arm saying, "Like this, look, look." When Keon does not respond, she places her hand over his eyes while saying, "Peek-a-boo."	While saying something, Keon adds more pillars to the row Hannah started and places both vehicles on the pillars.

End

Hannah and Razi

<table>
<tr><th>Hannah</th><th>Razi</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Razi enters the room first and sits at the chair further away from the blocks; Hannah sits closest to the blocks.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hannah asks in English, "What do you want to make?"</td><td>Razi answers, "I want to make a house."</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hannah repeats, "You want to make a house, okay," then begins talking in Arabic and placing rectangular neutral blocks horizontally end-to-end in front of where she is seated.</td><td>Razi observes what Hannah is doing. He reaches across her to gather the same type of blocks and begins his own structure in the same manner as Hannah.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hannah says something in Arabic.</td><td>Razi reaches to select a red cube and adds it to his row of blocks. He works quickly to keep pace with Hannah, and clears a space in front of himself so he can centre his structure on the table.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hannah says in English, "Yes, Razi, that's a good job." She looks at the block Razi has added and says, "Oh," then something in Arabic as she points first to the red cube and then to the red shirt Razi is wearing.</td><td>Razi touches his shirt and nods his head.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hannah with easy access to the blocks, sorts through them and chooses two neutral rectangles.</td><td>Razi, with very few blocks within easy reach, chooses a blue cylinder and incorporates it into one of the "walls" of his structure.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hannah, in seeing Razi place the blue cylinder, reaches over, moves it out of the way, and places a rectangle instead while saying something in Arabic.</td><td>Razi adjusts the blocks in front of him.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hannah again speaks in Arabic and begins to pass Razi a block from the structure she had begun in front of her; she then chooses to place the block into the structure herself. She places four blocks from her structure into Razi's structure while talking in Arabic, smiling, and laughing.</td><td>Razi watches as Hannah adds blocks to the structure in front of him. Twice he neatens the blocks Hannah has placed and adds one block on his own.</td></tr>
<tr><td>When Hannah has taken all the blocks from her structure and added them to Razi's, she sweeps more blocks out of the box, selects one more, and adds it to Razi's structure.</td><td>Razi continues to watch, and straighten up the blocks Hannah has placed.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hannah says something in Arabic.</td><td>Razi nods.</td></tr>
</table>

Hannah continues talking in Arabic then says "window" and adds another block.	Razi straightens up the block added by Hannah.
Hannah says something in Arabic.	Razi nods and looks at Hannah.
Hannah says in English, "Okay, that's right." She says something in Arabic while passing an arch shaped block to Razi.	Razi point to one of the sides of the structure.
Hannah places the block where Razi had pointed saying, "Wow, Razi, good job." She then speaks in Arabic then in English, "Can you help me?"	Razi nods.
Hannah passes Razi a block.	Razi says something.
Hannah says, "You want to build red, okay, red is here," and passes Razi another red rectangle.	Razi places the block while saying, "This one goes here."
"Okay, good idea" Hannah says, then adds an orange block on top of the one Razi had placed.	Razi adds another orange block on top of the two just placed.
Hannah says something in Arabic.	Razi looks at Hannah and nods.
Hannah places a block on the table to the side of the main structure while speaking in Arabic and pointing.	Razi points to the table on the other side of the structure.
Hannah passes Razi another block.	Razi places the block on the side of the structure he pointed to in the exact manner that Hannah had placed a block on her side of the structure.
Hannah adds blocks to both her side and Razi's side of the structure while speaking in Arabic.	Razi watches, then selects the same type and colour of block as Hannah, and adds it to his side. There are now two matching "additions" on either side of the main structure that I am later told is a fence.
Hannah says, "Wow, Razi," then selects three blocks, and adds them to the main structure while speaking in Arabic along with the English word, "roof."	Razi watches until selecting a triangle to place on top of the roof made by Hannah.
Hannah smiles, saying, "Yes, Razi, good job."	Razi sits with his hands on his lap examining the structure.
Hannah, speaking in Arabic places an arch shaped block, then removes it, and places a different block. She passes the arch to Razi while pointing to a place on the main structure, saying "window."	Razi takes the block and places it where Hannah had indicated.
Hannah looks to the video camera (or to me) then passes Razi a red cylinder while speaking in Arabic.	Razi places the cylinder on top of the structure then looks at Hannah.

While speaking in Arabic, Hannah moves the cylinder placed by Razi from the house onto the table beside the structure then reaches to take the blue cylinder Razi is holding and stacks it on top of the red one.	Razi watches with his hands on his lap.
Hannah builds another column out of two red cylinders and says, "See, red tree," and places it beside the structure.	Razi watches then reaches to straighten the walls on the addition closest to him.
Hannah speaks in Arabic and passes Razi two blue cubes.	Razi takes the two blue cubes and says something.
Hannah says, "You want red, okay, here's red," while passing Razi two red cubes.	Razi says something and places the two red cubes.
Hannah says, "Yes, good job."	Razi sits with his hands on his lap, and looks at Hannah.
Hannah speaks in Arabic, adds a block, and points to one of the walls.	Razi looks at Hannah and nods.
Hannah speaks in Arabic while waving her hand over the structure, and then says in English, "You have to break it down."	Razi looks to the video camera (or me).

End

Hannah and Chata

Hannah	Chata
	Chata enters the room first and goes straight to the blocks. He empties all the blocks out of the box onto the table, and then sits at the chair closest to the blocks. He lifts up the box and turns it so that the picture on the side is the right way up.
Hannah sits at the chair further from the blocks and says while watching Chata empty the blocks onto the table, "Yes, wow, what do you want to do with the blocks, Chata?"	Chata points at the picture on the side of the box and says, "This one."
"You want to build this?" Hannah asks while pointing to the box. She then reaches to take the box out of Chata's hands saying, "Okay, we have to put it down, and look careful and build, ya." She makes room for the box to sit on the corner of the table by Chata.	Chata looks at the video camera (or me).
Hannah says, "You see that," while pointing to the box.	

They both lean towards the box and carefully study the picture.

Hannah says, "Oh, okay, I know now, do you?"	Chata responds, "Ya."
While keeping an eye on the picture, Hannah begins to select blocks. She stands one green pillar on its end in front of Chata.	Chata places a yellow cube on top of the green pillar.
Hannah places a second green pillar beside the first one in front of Chata.	Chata tops the second pillar with another yellow cube saying, "Ya, we need that one."
Hannah points to the picture saying, "You see this? We need this one first."	Chata responds, "Oh."
Hannah removes the two yellow cubes and adds a yellow rectangle spanning the two pillars saying, "We have to put this here."	Chata says, "Oh," and leans closer to get a look at the picture on the side of the box, and then while pointing says, "We need that one."
Hannah points at the picture and says, "Ya, we need that one." She then picks up a neutral pillar and passes it to Chata saying, "Here where does this one go, look there."	Chata leans to look at the picture then places the pillar horizontally on top of the structure and says, "Right there."
Hannah says, "Okay, good," then brushes	Chata stands up saying, "Red," while he

her hand through the blocks and asks, “Okay, what colour do you want?”	reaches for a red rectangle and sets it on top of the structure.
Hannah responds, “Red, good.”	Chata stands up and points to the picture.
Hannah asks, “What colour do we want there?”	Chata answers, “Yellow, and blue.”
“Yellow, good,” Hannah says, “Yellow, and blue.”	Chata reaches in front of Hannah and selects a yellow rectangle.
Hannah picks up a yellow cube saying, “A small yellow I think.”	Chata looks at the picture saying, “No,” and setting the rectangle down takes the cube from Hannah. He places the yellow cube then a blue half circle on top of the structure.
Hannah places her open palm in front of Chata and says, “Wow, good job, Chata, give me high five.”	Chata shares a “high five” with Hannah.
Hannah thanks Chata then points to the picture and asks, “You want to build this one?”	Chata answers, “Ya.”
Hannah asks, “What colour we want down?”	Chata answers, “Blue,” and sets a yellow rectangle down horizontally on the table.
Hannah points at the block and says, “This one is yellow, and we want blue, which one is blue?”	Chata turns the yellow rectangle and stands it vertically on the table.
Hannah picks up the yellow rectangle, places it on the pile of unused blocks, and selects a blue pillar saying, “Here is blue.”	Chata watches then leans in to look at the picture.
Hannah says, “Here we put the yellow,” and places a yellow rectangle vertically alongside the first structure. The blue pillar is lying horizontally in front of Chata. She then asks, “Where does the blue go?”	Chata points on top of the yellow rectangle.
Hannah says, “No, where does the blue go? Look there, look there,” while leaning into the table and pointing to the picture.	Chata says, “Where?” then leans forward to get a closer look at the picture and points.
Hannah says, “There, the blue goes down.”	Chata slides the blue pillar up against the yellow rectangle.
Hannah says, “Yes, Chata, and what colour do we want now?”	Chata answers, “Yellow,” and stands up to survey the pile of blocks.
Hannah says, “Yellow, go find the yellow.”	Chata finds a yellow rectangle, sits down on the chair, and sets it vertically alongside the blue pillar then places his hands on his lap.
Hannah says, “Good job, Chata, you	Chata stands up and, touching the box,

know all your colours; and now what colour do we want there?"	points at the picture.
Hannah reaches and points at the picture saying, "No, on top, on top of this."	Chata respond, "Ya," and picks up a yellow cube.
Hannah picks up a neutral arch and passes it to Chata saying, "We want this colour."	Chata takes the block saying, "Ya," and places the arch to span the two up right yellow rectangles.
While straightening the arch Chata had placed, Hannah says, "Yes, good."	Chata stands to look at the picture, pointing and saying, "And this one."
Hannah says, "Ya, and what colour do you want?"	Chata, standing, reaches to select another neutral arch.
Hannah says enthusiastically, "You know, Chata, you know!"	Chat places the arch inverted on top of the first arch.
Hannah strokes Chata's head saying, "Good job Chata, excellent."	Chata raises his hand and begins to ask for a high five.
Hannah, beginning to ask what colour block is next, realizes Chata wants a high five. She says, "You want five?"	Chata gives Hannah a high five then leans in to look at the picture.
Hannah says, "Okay, good. What colour do you need?"	Chata stands and reaches for a block.
Hannah stops his reach and asks, "Can you tell me what colour?"	"Yellow," Chata answers.
"Good job, you have to find the yellow," Hannah says.	Standing, Chata rejects a yellow cube and chooses a yellow rectangle before sitting down and placing the block on top of the second structure.
"Okay good, and what colour do we want?" Hannah asks.	Chata stands up and quickly answers, "Blue and red," while pointing at the picture.
"Blue and red, good job," is Hannah's response.	Chata reaches towards the pile of blocks.
Hannah picks up a blue block, passing it to Chata, says, "I think blue is here."	Chata places the blue cube on top of the structure.
Hannah, saying, "Red, where did red go?" She then selects a red triangle and passes it to Chata.	Chata places the red triangle on top of the blue one.
Hannah says, "Good job."	Chata points at the top of the structure and says, "It looks like a doghouse."
"What?" Hannah responds.	Chata repeats, "It looks like a doghouse."
"Oh it looks like a doghouse," says Hannah.	Chata says, "I want to put the doghouse over there," as he points from the top of the structure down to the table in front of him.
Hannah points to the bottom of the structure saying, "This one is Chata's house," and then pointing to the cube and	Chat reaches up and removes the cube and triangle and places it on the table in front of him while saying, "I want to put

triangle at the top, she says, "This one is dog's house."	the dog house right here."
Hannah asks, "You want to put it down here?" She sweeps some blocks away from the opposite side of the structure from where Chata has placed it, and pats the table saying, "That is a good idea too, because the dog house should be in the back yard."	Chata says, "I want to make a dog."
Hannah repeats, "You want to make a dog."	"Ya," Chata says as he quickly picks up two yellow cubes and attempts to stack them one on top of the other in an offset manner.
"Okay, how are you going to make the dog, can you show me that?" Hannah asks.	Chata then stacks the two cubes neatly on top of one another and gestures by bringing his hands close together while saying, "A small dog."
"Okay, small dog, that is the way," says Hannah.	Chata un-stacks the cubes, then gestures by moving his hands apart and says, "Big dog."
Hannah repeats, "You want a big dog, okay."	Chata stands and reaches for a block saying, "We need that one."
Hannah says, "Okay you will have to show Hannah how to make the dog."	Chata places four yellow cubes in a row in front of himself.
"Can you show me?" Hannah asks.	Chata responds, "Yes." As he continues to select blocks he asks, "Will you help me?"
"Okay," Hannah answers, "I will make mine too," as she begins selecting blocks.	"You will make a dog?" asks Chata.
"Ya, I will make a dog," replies Hannah as she looks over to see what Chata is doing with his blocks.	Chata accidentally knocks most of the first structure over as he works with the blocks in front of him.

They both remark, "Oh no."

	Chata says, "I will make it again," as he picks up one of the fallen blocks.
"Okay, you want to make it again, good idea," is Hannah's response.	"It's a castle," Chata says as he begins to place blocks.
"It's a castle, good job Chata, you want to make a castle this time," says Hannah.	Chata continues to stack blocks into a "tower" shape.
Hannah is shuffling a collection of blue blocks on the table in front of her.	Chata looks over to see what Hannah is doing and says, "No, no a dog."
"You want to make the dog?" asks Hannah. "Okay, we can make the dog."	"Ya," Chata answers.
"Okay, we can make the dog," repeats	Chata keeps adding blocks upwards to

Hannah as she continues to select blue blocks.	the "castle" structure, then points and says, "Look it."
Hannah looks at the structure and says, "Wow, nice, red castle. Is it a big castle?"	Chata answers first, "Yes," then "No, it is for the dog."
"For the dog," Hannah questions, "The dog has a castle too?"	"Ya," Chata says as he adds another block and part of the structure comes crashing down.
"Oh, Chata," Hannah responds to the blocks falling.	"I'm going to make it again," Chata says as he goes down onto the floor to retrieve some fallen blocks.
"How you can make a house for me?" Hannah asks.	Chata balances blocks on the castle while repeating after Hannah, "Make a house?"
"You have to build a house in another place," Hannah continues as she sweeps some blocks out of the way in front of the castle.	Chata continues stacking blocks on the castle.
Hannah continues to encourage Chata to make a house.	Chata then calls my attention to what he has built, "Look Darcey."

I remark how tall the structure is.

Hannah adds, "Yes, very tall like Chata."	Chata says, "It is like a birdhouse."
Hannah leans closer to understand what Chata has said, "Like who?" she questions.	"Like a birdhouse," Chata repeats.
"Like birdhouse, oh, you know the birdhouse is all like here," as she gestures upwards with her arm.	"Ya, and this one is doghouse," Chata says as pointing to the structure between him and the castle.
Hannah picks up the "doghouse" and holds it up telling me, "You see Darcey, and this one is a dog house, and the birdhouse, good idea."	Chata takes the doghouse that Hannah had moved and places it on top of the block structure in front of him.
Hannah asks, "You want the doghouse to be here?" as she points to where Chata has placed it.	Chata replies, "This is not a doghouse, this is a birdhouse," and pointing to the top of the other structure adds, "and this one is a birdhouse."
Hannah says, "Good job, Chata, you know how to recognize these too." She then begins clearing blocks from in front of the structure.	Chata is reaching into his pocket.
Hannah notices Chata trying to take something from his pocket and asks, "What is in your pocket, a car?"	Chata extends it towards Hannah to show her.
Hannah again clears the space in front of the structure and asks, "Where you put your car?"	Chata answers, "In my pocket."

"You put the car in your pocket, but the car will be in the garage," Hannah continues as she pats the cleared spot on the table in front of the structure.	Chata passes the car to Hannah saying, "This one is yours."
Hannah accepts the car with thanks and again pats the table asking Chata to make a garage for the car.	Chata tells Hannah the car is from daycare.
Hannah laughs and says, "You put the car in your pocket from daycare, okay, thank you for giving it to me."	A block falls to the floor; Chata picks it up and says, "Lets make a birdhouse."
"Okay, you want to make the birdhouse, okay. We can make the garage too to put the car in," Hannah says.	Standing, Chata continues to add blocks to the structure in front of him.
Hannah questions, "How we can make the garage?" She then starts to attach a "garage" to the front of the structure.	Chata keeps building upwards.

Hannah keeps trying to engage Chata in the "garage" scenario, he keeps adding blocks to the tall structure in front of him and occasionally answering, "Ya."

Hannah "drives" the car out of the garage and asks if they are going to daycare or to school.	Chata answers, "To school."
Hannah asks the name of Chata's teacher.	Chata gives his teacher's name then drives the car back into the garage.
Hannah tries to engage Chata in more conversation about school.	Chata points to the car and says, "This one is my dad."
"Oh, that is where your dad sits in the car, let's show Darcey," Hannah says as she brings the car into plain view.	Chata drives the car around the table and back into the garage.
Hannah asks Chata where he sits in the car.	Chata indicates the front of the car.
Hannah asks, "Here or here?" as she points first to the front of the car then the back.	Chata points to the front of the car while saying, "Back."
Hannah questions, "In the back here?" while pointing to the back.	Chata turns his attention back to the tall tower structure and begins talking once again about the birdhouse.
Hannah wonders if Chata could make her house.	"Okay," Chata answers before continuing to talk about the birdhouses.
"Okay, did you see a bird this morning?" Hannah wonders.	"Ya," is Chata's response.
"What sound the bird made?" Hannah continues.	"Chirp, chirp," Chata answers.
"Chirp, chirp," Hannah repeats while smiling. She then takes two neutral pillars	Chata takes notice, retrieves a neutral arch, and places it to span the two pillars.

and stands them vertically beside each other.	
Hannah says, "You want this one," and places her hands on her lap. When Chata is finished placing the arch, she turns it over saying, "We can put it upside down."	Chata agrees and pulls the second arch Hannah is bringing to the construction out of her hands. He points to the picture on the side of the box and tells Hannah he will, "Build it like that one."
"Oh, like that one," Hannah remarks as she watches, then questions while pointing to the top of the arch, "What about here, on the top?"	Chata points to the picture saying, "We need that one," before adding a green cube.
Hannah wonders what colour is next and offers that it is "orange," while extending an orange block to Chata.	Chata agrees; takes the orange triangle Hannah offers and adds it to the top of the structure. Once again, he designates the top of this structure as a birdhouse.
Hannah wonders, "What about this?" pointing to the two arches below the birdhouse.	"This is an eye," Chata suggests as he bends over to look through the oval opening between the arches.
Hannah asks, "It is a door or a window?"	"It's a window," Chata answers before turning again to talk of the birdhouses. He then stands and gathers blocks into a clear space on the table and announces he is going to build Hannah's house.
Hannah repeats, "You are going to make my house?"	"Yes," Chata responds as he gestures with his arms while alternating between looking at the picture and looking at the blocks on the table.
Hannah tries to help by offering blocks.	Chata says, "No, long, long, long."
Hannah passes Chata a block and says, "Here is a long one."	Chata places the rectangle Hannah passed him vertically on top of the structure he has started. He again points to the picture saying, "We need blue," as he reaches across the table to the pile of blocks.
Hannah passes Chata a blue half circle saying, "This one, here is one."	Chata has picked up an identical block to the one Hannah was offering and places it on top of the vertical he had previously placed.
Hannah watches then says, "Oh, you found it; good job. That's my house?"	"Ya," is Chata's answer.
"Good job," Hannah says. As she strokes Chata on the back. She thanks him for building her house.	Chata reaches across the table asking for a blue block. In so doing, he knocks down part of "Hannah's house." He drops to the floor to pick up the blocks.
Hannah remarks that he can fix it.	Chata agrees and begins to add the same blocks in the same fashion. Once the house is rebuilt, he starts to drive the car

	through the house.
Hannah questions whether the car should be driven in the house or in the garage.	Chata says, "Oh," and begins to shuffle some blocks into place in front of the house.

End

Cheri and Keon

Cheri	Keon
Cheri helps Keon settle in the chair further away from the blocks before she sits at the chair closest to the blocks.	Keon leans forward with his elbows on the table and looks out the window behind the video camera.
Cheri calls Keon's attention to the blocks saying, "Look."	Keon says something as he brings his attention to the table. He is holding a small toy car in his hand that he rests on the table.
"Ya, look at the blocks," Cheri says as she points at the table.	Keon leans forward, comes off his chair, and reaches into the pile of blocks that are spilling out of the box.
"Ya, those are called blocks," Cheri says.	Keon pulls some blocks towards him as he vocalizes in a singsong voice. He returns to sitting in the chair.
Cheri smiles as she watches Keon. She pulls some blocks out of the box, sweeps them towards Keon saying, "Let's bring them closer."	Keon has set a row of blocks in front of him. He again says something.
Cheri asks, "What you making?"	Keon sets the car on top of the row of blocks he has made.
"Oh, you brought a car with you," Hannah remarks.	"Oh, oh," Keon says as he drives the car off the end of the row of blocks.
"Oh, oh," Cheri repeats as she adds a block to the row saying, "We add one here."	Keon stands to look into the pile of blocks then tries to leave the table.
Cheri takes Keon by the arm saying, "Keon, come, come Keon."	Keon sits back down and points at the ceiling while saying something.
Cheri looks up and points saying, "Ya, lights up there; ya, lights. Now look, look what we have here, blocks," as she points at the table.	Keon leans forward and looks at the video camera while saying something.
"Keon, look Keon are you going to help me, look, Keon," Cheri continues as she adds a block to the row in front of them.	Keon looks down to the table and says something.
"Drive your car all the way over. Look, Keon, Keon," Cheri says as she slides her finger along the row of blocks.	"Oh, oh," Keon says as he "drives" his car along the row of blocks.
Cheri sets her hands on the table in front of her for a moment then sets an arch on the table beside the row of blocks saying as she runs her finger along the table, "The car can go through here. Like that, zoom," says Cheri.	Keon tries to drive the car under the arch but it will not fit.
"Can it go? No?" Cheri asks as she sets another arch parallel alongside the first	Keon takes his car and drives it through the oval opening made by the two arches.

one. She then tries stacking the two arches on top of one another; finally, she inverts one, and sets the other on top to form an oval opening.	
"Wow, look at that Keon," Cheri remarks.	Keon sets a green cube inside the oval opening.
Cheri observes for a moment before saying, "You covered it up."	Keon says something while he adds another block to the row of blocks in front of him. The closed off oval made from the two arches is at the end of the row of blocks.
"You're putting it like that," Cheri says.	Keon takes the car and smashes it against the arches then turns in his chair away from Cheri.
"Wow, what happened," Cheri says in response to the car smashing into the blocks.	Keon gets up from his chair and walks to the door.
"Keon, Keon, come," Cheri calls.	Keon walks back and forth between the door and the table twice while saying something.
Cheri, sitting in chair and watching says, "Door, that's the door."	Keon plays with the doorknob then while saying something points at the ceiling.
"Ya, the lights, up there, up," Cheri says while pointing at the ceiling.	Keon turns again to play with the doorknob.
"Come, come over here, Keon, Keon. That's for the light, no don't touch that one," Cheri says as she gestures for him to come to the table.	Keon comes back to the table and sits on the chair.
Cheri helps Keon to settle in his chair.	He turns and points to the light switch then looks up at the ceiling while saying something.
"You're telling me something about the lights," Cheri nods.	Keon stacks the two arches crisscross on top of each other while vocalizing in a singsong voice. He then sets his car on top.
Cheri smiles as she watches then says, "You're singing."	Keon makes a row of blocks extending in front of the arches. The row extends to the edge of the table. He suspends another block in mid air at the end of the row of blocks.
Cheri leans forward and points to the table beside the row of blocks saying, "Put it right here, put it here."	Keon takes the block and sets it at the end of the line opposite of where he was trying to add it previously. He then pushes all the blocks off the end of the table.
"Oh Keon, oh, what happened?" Cheri	Keon laughs then gets up from his chair

asks as she watches and smiles. "They all fell off."	and goes to pick the blocks up off the floor.
Cheri smiles as she watches Keon pick up the blocks.	Keon picks up the blocks one at a time and tosses them onto the table.
"You're picking them up. You're putting them on the table," Cheri says while patting the table, then repeats, "Table."	Keon continues picking up the blocks and tossing them onto the table.
"Is there anymore?" Cheri wonders as she leans over to look under the table. "Oh, one, how many more is there?"	Keon tosses another block saying, "One, two, three."
"Two," Cheri says.	Keon tosses one last block and it falls off the other end of the table and back onto the floor.
Cheri reaches down to pick up the block, saying, "Oops, oops, be careful, I'll pick this one up." Cheri waves the block in the air then sets it on the table in front of Keon saying, "Look, one, can you count with me? One, can you say one?" as she points to the block she has set down.	Keon returns to his chair at the table.
Cheri continues as she stacks a second long rectangular block parallel on top of the first one she has set on the table in front of Keon, "Two."	Keon touches the sides of the two blocks Cheri has placed in front of him.
Cheri adds a third rectangle and places it so that one end hangs over the edge of the first two blocks saying, "Three."	Keon slides the block Cheri placed into position so it is no longer hanging past the edges of the other two blocks.
Cheri adds another block, this time perpendicular to the first three blocks, saying, "Four."	Keon turns the block so it parallels the others.
Cheri adds another block to the top of the stack, again placing it perpendicular to the others, saying, "Five."	Keon again turns the block so it parallels the others.

This pattern of Cheri adding a block in a perpendicular fashion and Keon reorienting it to be parallel with the rest of the stack of blocks continues to a height of seven blocks before Keon leaves his chair and walks over to the video camera.

End

Cheri and Razi

Cheri	Razi
	Razi enters the room first and takes the chair further from the blocks. He picks up two neutral arches and one yellow rectangle that are near him. He stacks the arches one on top of the other.
"Wow, look at all these colourful blocks, Razi," Cheri says as she sits down. "Oh, what's happening here; what are you doing?"	Razi slides the yellow rectangle through the opening in the first arch.
"Huh, what are you doing?" Cheri repeats, sitting with her hands on her lap, leaning towards Razi, and watching.	"I'm making upstairs," Razi says. The blocks fall over. He reaches into the pile of blocks spilling out of the box in front of Cheri to get an orange rectangle.
"Upstairs," Cheri says while nodding, "What are you making? Can I build with you?"	Razi rejects the orange rectangle and gathers a yellow one that he pairs up with the yellow one already in front of him. He stacks the two rectangles horizontally on top of one another.
Cheri repeats, "What are you making?" as she reaches into the pile of blocks and gathers three blocks that she stacks in front of her.	"The upstairs," Razi says as he continues to manipulate the yellow rectangles.
"The upstairs, you are going to make the upstairs, okay, let's see how we can make upstairs. Okay, put one over here, and we put one over here, and we put one here," Cheri says as she slides some blocks over to join up with the blocks Razi has in front of him.	Razi leans back and watches then reaches into the block pile for another block.
"What else do you need to make upstairs?" Cheri asks.	"Make a window," Razi answers as he continues to build, adding an arch to the top of the stack of rectangles he has made.
Cheri sits watching, saying, "Make a window, oh, okay. There we go, okay."	Razi adds a second arch on top of the first one.
Pointing to the second arch, Cheri asks, "What's that one?"	Razi looks at the structure, shrugs, and then slides a blue rectangle through the opening in the second arch.
Cheri adds an orange pillar to the top of the structure.	

Razi's nose is running so I offer him a tissue. He blows his nose. I tell him he can just toss it on the floor for now. He looks on the floor and hesitates. Cheri suggests he can put it in his pocket until they get back to the children's centre. This he does.

Cheri adds another orange pillar to the top of the structure then sets a blue rectangle straddling the pillars while asking, "Shall we put that one there to make a window?"	Razi leans to look through the opening Cheri has created.
"Okay, what else are you going to make for your house?" Cheri asks.	"A door," Razi replies, his hands on his lap.
"A door, where are we going to put your door?" Cheri asks.	Razi reaches for a blue pillar and sets it in front of the structure.
"Oh, ya, okay, and what else does it need?" asks Cheri as she sweeps some blocks out of the box.	"A chair," Razi answers, as he leans to look at the structure from the side. He has his hands on his lap as he fidgets in the chair and looks over at Cheri.
"A chair, umm, let's see," Cheri wonders as she reaches into the pile of blocks. She stops, brings her hand back to her side and asks, "What are you making for the chair, what colour do you want the chair?"	Razi takes an orange rectangle and adds it to one side of the structure.
Cheri says as she leans towards Razi, smiling, "Now we need someone sitting in the chair. Who is going to sit in the chair?"	"Me," Razi answers as he reaches for another block.
"Okay, Razi, where are you sitting?" Cheri asks as she watches.	Razi places a red pillar in front of the structure.
"Okay, can I come sit next to you?" Cheri asks as she slides a green rectangle to rest beside the orange rectangle Razi had earlier said was his chair.	Razi touches the green rectangle.
Cheri places an inverted arch on the green rectangle then sets a red cube inside the arch, saying, "I'm going to make a chair next to Razi. Okay, I'm going to sit in my chair." She smiles, laughs, looks at Razi, and says, "How is that?"	Razi smiles and looks at Cheri.
"What are we doing now?" asks Cheri, while throwing her arms up in the air.	"Nothing," relies Razi as he reaches for a block.
"Nothing," repeats Cheri. "Um, do you want us to colour or watch TV?"	Razi looks at the video camera (or me) and adds a block to the top of the structure.
Cheri notes what Razi has added to the structure by pointing and saying, "Oh, look at that, what's this for?"	Razi looks at the side of the structure as he neatens the blocks.
Cheri continues, "What did you put on	Razi scratches his head, looks sideways

top of the house, it looks nice."	at the structure then sits back in his chair and watches.
Cheri selects two neutral arches and places them in front of the structure, creating an oval opening between the two blocks.	Razi watches, and then adds a blue half circle into the oval opening.
Cheri asks, "Okay, what's inside there? What's that?" as she points to the blue half circle.	Razi shrugs his shoulders.
"That can be our, ah, um, the dog?" Cheri suggests.	Razi nods.
"Okay, what else?" Cheri wonders as she adds a red pillar to the top of the arch structure.	Razi shrugs and watches with his hands resting on the table.
"Can we make another upstairs," Cheri asks while looking at Razi after placing another pillar beside the one she just placed.	Razi says something and reaches for two blocks. He begins to add them to the top of the structure.
"And over here," Cheri continues, "I'm going to make a garage."	After placing his two blocks, Razi says, "Okay," and turns to watch Cheri.
"Okay, I'm going to make a garage," Cheri says as she sets two yellow triangles vertically on the table between her and Razi. Cheri says something inaudible.	Razi shrugs as he watches.
Cheri sees Razi nod, continues building, saying, "Okay, we'll put a top in it, and we have a garage," as she places an orange rectangle spanning the two upright rectangles. She then asks, "What do you need for the garage?"	Razi keeps watching.
"What do we need for the garage?" Cheri asks again.	"This," Razi offers as he reaches and picks up a blue rectangle.
"What's that?" Cheri asks.	Razi keeps watching.
Cheri selects a blue half circle from the pile of blocks then while pushing it along the table makes "vehicle noises" then asks, "What do you need for the garage?"	Razi looks up at Cheri.
"What's this?" Cheri questions between making vehicle noises as she continues pushing the block along the table.	Razi watches, still holding the blue rectangle in his hand.
"Beep, beep, what's that?" Cheri questions as she pushes her block towards the block Razi has resting on the table.	"This one needs a car," Razi responds as he places his blue rectangle upright inside the garage.
"A car! Right! Is that the car?" Cheri asks	Razi nods.

while pointing to the blue rectangle Razi has placed.	
"Okay," pointing again, "That's your car!"	Razi sets the rectangle down so it is horizontal.
Cheri points again to the block Razi has and asks, "Whose car is that one?"	"Mine," Razi answers.
"Mine, okay," Cheri repeats after Razi, "And this one is my car, so, okay. Beep, beep, Razi."	Pushing his car around the table in front of him, Razi offers, "We have our own car."
Cheri agrees, "Ya, we have our own car."	"Your own," Razi says.
"Ya, this is my car," agrees Cheri.	Razi says something.
Cheri leans towards Razi saying, "Pardon me?"	Razi repeats himself.
Cheri again leans forward; looks at Razi and repeats, "Pardon me?"	"Just bought your car," Razi says.
"Ya, this is my car, I just bought my car. You know what? My car is blue. I'm going to drive it around your doghouse, then I'm going to come by and say hi to Razi," Cheri says as she pushes the blue half circle along the table in front of her.	Razi sets his rectangle vertically back inside the garage after pushing it around the table.
Cheri stops her car beside Razi's garage saying, "Beep, beep, beep, beep, Razi! Come out and play."	"This is my house," Razi says, fidgeting on his chair and touching the blocks on the side of the structure in front of him.
"Your house, okay, alright, I'm coming around that side. Okay, Zoom, zoom, zoom," Cheri says as she looks around to where Razi has touched the structure.	Having taken the car out of his garage, Razi continues, "There is nobody home."
While driving her car towards Razi's house Cheri says, "There is nobody home, okay, well, I'll, well, I'll wait until you come home. What time are you going to come home?"	Razi fidgeting in his chair, looks at the video camera (or me), sits back in his chair, leaving the block on the table. He then leans forward to touch the block and answers, "Six."
"Six, oh, that's going to be a long time, what am I going to do in the mean time?" Cheri wonders as she drives her car back to in front of her.	Razi places his blue rectangle alongside the structure and neatens the blocks of the structure.
"And where are you going?" Cheri continues.	Razi sits up, rests his head in one hand and answers, "The doctor."
"The doctor, how come?" asks Cheri.	Razi makes no reply as he sits gazing at the video camera.
Cheri looks at Razi, waits, and then asks, "What are you going to the doctor for?"	"Next week," is Razi's reply.
"Oh! You're going to the doctor next week. Okay," Cheri responds.	Razi says something as he touches the blocks on this structure.
"Pardon me," Cheri says.	"With my dad; I'm going with my dad,"

	Razi repeats as he looks at the side of his structure.
"You're going with your dad, okay, alright. Is it fun going to the doctor?" Cheri asks.	"You get toys," Razi answers, still looking at the structure.
"You get toys, alright, cool," Cheri says.	"And blocks," adds Razi.
"And blocks, wow, what kind of blocks do you get?" Cheri asks.	"Five; a lot," Razi replies.
"A lot. Show me five," Cheri requests as she stops touching the blocks and looks at Razi's hand.	Razi, very quickly pointing to the fingers on his right hand using his left counts one through eight.
Cheri smiles and reaches towards Razi's hand saying, "Let's try that again."	Razi sets his hand down on the table.
Cheri, touching one finger at a time counts, "One, two, can you count with me?"	Razi joins in the counting for "three, four, and five."
"Five!" concludes Cheri, "High five!" Putting her arm in the air.	Razi shares a high five with Cheri then looks at the video camera (or me).
"Alright, can we stack five blocks? Do you think we can stack five blocks? Let's try that," Cheri suggests as she points to the top of the garage structure.	Razi nods then replies, "Okay," while reaching for a block. He places a blue rectangle vertically inside the garage.
"Okay, one, okay," Cheri says and then slides the block out from under the roof of the garage so she can stack a yellow cube on top of it, while saying, "Two; let's try another one."	Razi watches then looks around to the back of the garage to touch a blue half circle.
Cheri reminds Razi, "We are stacking five," as she watches him with her hands in her lap.	Razi says while touching the blue half circle, "This is going to be a TV."
"That's going to be a TV, okay," says Cheri.	Razi leaves the blue half circle where it is and picks up another one and moves it to the side of the house.
Cheri asks, "And what is that one over there?" as she watches Razi place the block.	Razi says something.
Cheri leans towards Razi saying, "That's your, um … Pardon me."	"That's my TV," Razi repeats.
"Your TV. Oh, okay," says Cheri while leaning back. She then looks over to where Razi has placed the blue half circle and asks, "What are you doing over there?"	Razi looks down and shrugs.
"You're watching TV? What's on TV?" Cheri asks.	"Spiderman," Razi quickly replies while looking at Cheri.
"Oh Spiderman," Cheri repeats in a	"I'm watching it," offers Razi as he sits

whisper while she takes more blocks out of the box.	looking at Cheri.
"Oh, you're watching Spiderman, okay," says Cheri.	"At my house," continues Razi.
"At your house, okay. I'm going to make a playground over here so we can go outside and play. What's that look like?" Cheri asks while pointing to a rectangle angled off a cube.	Razi looks at the video camera (or me) and shrugs.
"You know what, that's a slide. Here's Razi, wee," Cheri says as she slides a cube down the incline.	Razi watches, then reaches to repeat Cheri's action.
Cheri slides her chair back asking, "Are you going to come play in the playground?"	Razi sends the cube down the incline.
"Oh, you slide down," Cheri says while picking up another cube and "walking" it towards the "slide." "Let's see if we can go up again."	Razi picks up the cube he had slid down the incline.
Cheri sends her cube down saying, "Wee, look at me Razi!"	Razi sends his cube down the incline.
Cheri stacks a second cube saying, "I'm making it even higher," then "climbs" her cube to the top, "Uh, uh, I made it, wee! Let's see if you can climb up there."	After watching Cheri, Razi takes his cube and climbs it to the top. When he attempts to send it down the incline, the incline falls to the table.
"Oh, what happened to the slide?" Cheri asks.	"Broken," Razi says.
"Broken," Cheri repeats after Razi.	Razi fixes the incline and sends his cube down.
"Oh, down the slide we go!" Cheri says while making a second stack of two cubes and leaning a cylinder against them. "I'll make it higher. I have to climb up this one. Uh, uh, uh, look at me Razi, I made it, wow!"	Razi watches Cheri then looks at the video camera (or me).

End

Cheri and Chata

Cheri	Chata
	"Darcey!" Chata calls as he enters the room and walks over to the video camera, "Let's see."
Cheri enters the room and remains standing behind the table.	After being allowed to look into the video camera, Chata goes to the table and sits at the chair closest to the blocks. He then stands up and begins to upset all the blocks out of the box while saying, "We can play with these." He continues saying something that is not clear amidst the rattling blocks.
Cheri sits on the chair further away from the blocks saying, "Oh, wow."	"Let's make this one," Chata says as he points to the picture on the side of the box.
"Do you want to make that one?" Cheri asks.	"Ya," Chata leans to take a closer look at the side of the box.
"Okay, we can do that. Let's put it like that so we can see," suggests Cheri as she adjusts the box.	Chata stands two green rectangles on their vertical ends.
Cheri looks at the picture and asks, "Which one are you making."	'Huh?" Chata says.
Cheri repeats, "Which one are you making."	Chata points, "This one and this one."
Cheri points, "Okay, this one and this one, okay."	Chata continues building.
Cheri reaches for two orange rectangles, one shorter than the other and stands them vertically on the table saying, "Okay, so we have this one and this one."	Chata sees what Cheri has done and says, "It's too small." He takes the green rectangle in his hand and tries to span the two vertical rectangles.
"It's too small, okay, so what can I do? What do I need to do?" Cheri asks.	Chata stands up, finds a longer orange rectangle in the pile of blocks, quickly removes the shorter upright, and places the one of equal length, saying, "This one fits."
"Okay," Cheri says.	Chata places a neutral arch to span the two uprights saying, "We need this one."
Cheri points to the picture saying, "Okay, like that, does it go that way?"	Chata looks at the picture, says, "Oh," and rotates the arch twice in his hands. He then reaches to point something out on the picture and knocks the box from the table.

They both try to prevent the box from falling.

Cheri laughs.	Chata drops to the floor, picks up the box, and sets it on the table saying, "This fell off."
Cheri adjusts the box so she can see the picture, saying, "Let's put it here. There we go."	Chata rotates the box so he can see the pictures on a different side of the box. He points at the picture saying, "Let's do this one."
"Okay you want to make that one," Cheri says. Pointing to the other side of the box, she questions, "We're not making that one anymore?"	Chata, still standing, leans over to look at the picture Cheri has referred to. After a moment he says, "I like that one."
"Which one, which one do you like?" Cheri asks.	Chata places his fingers against his lips and then pointing in turn to the series of structures on the side of the box says, "This one, and this one, and this one (7 times)."
"Okay, so which one are we making?" Cheri repeats.	Chata repeats again while pointing, "This one, and this one, and this one (7 times)."
"Well, okay, lets get started," responds Cheri.	"I want to make that birdhouse," Chata says.
"Okay, you're going to make that house," Cheri replies.	"No, that birdhouse," corrects Chata.
"A what kind of house?" Cheri says as she leans over to look at Chata's face.	Chata looks at Cheri and repeats, "A birdhouse."
"Birdhouse? Oh, okay! I'm going to make a birdhouse too," Cheri says as she stands two rectangles vertically in front of her.	"Me too," agrees Chata as he sets an orange triangle in front of Cheri, "Here use that one."
"Use this one. Where am I going to put this one?" questions Cheri.	"Over here," Chata suggests as he points to the tops of the two vertical rectangles.
Looking confused, Cheri sets the triangle on its side on top of the rectangles and asks, "Over here, like that?"	Chata, after setting his orange triangle on top of his structure, says, "No," points to his own, "Like this, see." He then rotates the triangle Cheri has placed saying, "I'll show you."
Cheri says, "Okay, you show me."	"See, you go like this," as he sets the triangle back on top of the two vertical rectangles.
"You go like that, wow," Cheri says.	"It's a birdhouse," Chata responds.
"It's a birdhouse, here's the bird, tweet, tweet, tweet," Cheri says, pretending her fingers are a bird.	Chata watches then points to his "birdhouse" and says, "We need another box." He stands up, removes the triangle from the top of Cheri's birdhouse, and knocks the two upright rectangles over before reaching into the pile of blocks.
"We need a box, okay, so then let's find	"No! This one, see," Chata insists as he

one," Cheri says as she reaches into the block pile and pulls out a neutral arch. "There's one over here."	places a second blue cube and orange rectangle beside the first birdhouse on top of his structure.
"Oh, and what is this one?" asks Cheri.	"It's a birdhouse," Chata replies.
"A birdhouse," repeats Cheri.	"Two birdhouses," says Chata.
"Two birdhouses," Cheri repeats.	The blocks fall down.
Cheri laughs.	Chata laughs and says something.
"We can build it again," suggests Cheri.	"Ya," agrees Chata.
"Okay, we can fix it and make it strong," says Cheri.	Chata starts to rebuild the structure. He places two arches in a different manner than they were before. He pauses to look at what he has done. He scratches his head as he looks.
"Oh, what happened there?" Cheri asks while looking at the structure.	"Hu," Chata says, and then points to the picture saying, "That one."
"Oh, okay, that's different," Cheri says as she neatens the blocks Chata has placed.	"Ya," Chata takes the two arches on top of the vertical rectangles, rotates them, and replaces them in a still different manner than they were originally placed.
"That's good Chata, you're copying from that one," Cheri says as she watches.	"We need this one," Chata says as he points to the picture. He selects another block and adds it to the structure.
"Okay, wow," comments Cheri.	Chata adds another block.
"Oh, you put that one on," Cheri observes, "That's different."	When adding the next block to the structure the blocks all fall to the table.
"Oh, it fell down," Cheri says.	"Ya," Chata replies as he quickly starts to rebuild.
Cheri starts building her own structure.	"I need this one," Chata says as he stacks all the arches he can find one on top of the other.
"You need that one. You're stacking them, oh. Look at this," Cheri says as she stops building and watches what Chata is doing.	After stacking five arches, Chata sits back in his chair and says, "This is a birdhouse."
"That's lots of birdhouses," Cheri comments as she watches with her hands on her lap.	"Ya," Chata says as he adds a blue pillar and a blue cube on the top of the arches. "I'm going to make a birdhouse."
Cheri selects an orange triangle and tries to place it on top of the blue pillar and cube asking, "Are you going to try and put this one like that?"	Taking the triangle out of Cheri's hand Chata says, "No; no." He scratches his chin as he looks into the pile of blocks.
"It doesn't go like that? Okay, I'm going to make my birdhouse," Cheri says as she reaches for some blocks.	"I'm going to make my birdhouse too," Chata says.
"Okay, where is your birdhouse?" Cheri asks, extending a feigned exasperated	"This one," Chata answers while pointing to the structure of arches with the blue

gesture with her hand.	column on top.
"Okay," Cheri nods and then waits.	"There's lots and lots of blocks," Chata says as he sorts through the blocks to find another blue cube that he adds to the column saying, "And this one too."
"Okay," Cheri repeats and nods again as she clears a spot in front of her and sets down two blocks. "I'm going to use these ones and make my birdhouse."	Chata reaches across to where Cheri is building to reach another blue cube. He says, "This one," and shows it to Cheri before adding it to the tall column on his birdhouse.
"Hum, okay," Cheri nods.	Chata adds the cube to now have a stack of five arches, one pillar, and three cubes.
Cheri has in front of her two pillars set vertically beside each other that are spanned by a blue rectangle. On top of this she places an orange cube while saying, "And this colour, I'm using this colour. That's my birdhouse." She touches the cube and asks, "So this is the birdhouse?"	"No," Chata says as he selects an orange triangle and places it on top of the cube, "You need that one."
"Oh, okay," Cheri says.	"This a birdhouse," Chata says.
"And what is this one called?" Cheri asks as she points to the triangle.	"Huh?" says Chata.
"This one?" Cheri repeats as she makes a triangle shape above her head with her arms.	"Um," Chata says as he looks at what Cheri is doing with her arms.
Cheri moves her arms back and forth, as she continues holding them in the triangle shape. She says, "On the top." She then points to the triangle, "This is the roof,"	"Uh, ya," Chata says.
"Ya, okay. So this is the birdhouse," Cheri confirms.	"Ya," Chata says as he turns his attention back to his structure. Pointing to his structure he says, "This one a birdhouse."
"What kind of house?" Cheri asks.	"This one a birdhouse. This one a birdhouse. This one a birdhouse. This one a birdhouse," Chata says as he points to each of the blue cubes on top of the arches.
"How many birdhouse you have?" Cheri asks.	Chata holds up first four and then five fingers on one hand.
"What's that?" Cheri questions.	"Five," Chata answers.
"Oh, five, let's count," Cheri suggest, pointing to each of the blue cubes as Chata counts.	"One, um, two, three, four," Chata counts.
"Oh, you said five," says Cheri.	"Five," Chata repeats while he adds another cube to the top.

The column of cubes on top of the arches starts to wobble, Cheri places her hands alongside the column to steady it while saying, "Oops, what's going to happen? Oh, wow. I wonder how many houses, be careful," Cheri says as she watches Chata add more blocks.	Chata adds another cube.
"Are you going to put another one on top there? Oh, wow, look at that," Cheri says.	Chata places a short blue rectangle horizontally across the column of cubes.
"That's really high," Cheri remarks.	"Ya. It's high like me," Chata agrees as he adds a neutral cube onto the top.
"Wow," Cheri admires.	Chata repeats, "It's high like me," as he raises his arms up over his head.
"It's high like you, wow, just about, ya," Cheri says as she uses her arm to draw an imaginary line across the top of the structure to compare its height with Chata's height. "How many is there, do you think we can count and see?" Cheri draws a line in the air up and down along the structure and then points to the first block at the bottom.	Chata, with his hand on his lips says, "One."
Cheri smiles and points to the second block saying, "Two."	"Two," Chata repeats.
"You can do it," Cheri encourages.	"Three," Chata says.
"That's right," Cheri says, smiling and pointing to the blocks one-by-one.	"Four, five, six, eleven," Chata says.
"Seven," Cheri corrects.	"Seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve," Chata concludes.
"Twelve, that's right, wow! Twelve; your birdhouse is really tall," Cheri says.	Chata adds one more block and the structure comes crashing to the floor and table.

"Oooh!" they both exclaim. Chata picks up the blocks that have fallen to the floor, and returns them to the table. He indicates that he wants to make "something," but Cheri is not able to understand the word he is saying. After several frustrated attempts to be understood, Chata leaves the table to look through the viewfinder of the video camera.

End

Bonita and Keon

Bonita	Keon
	Keon is vocalizing in a singsong voice as he walks towards the room. He enters first.
Bonita is mimicking Keon's singsong vocalizations.	Keon walks directly to the video camera.
Bonita calls Keon to the table in English as well as using the Nuer word for "come."	Keon does not respond to the verbal requests to come.
Still asking him verbally to come, Bonita walks over to where Keon is looking at the video camera, takes him by the arm, and leads him over to the table. She seats him at the chair further away from the blocks; she takes the chair closer to the blocks.	Keon skips and laughs on the way to being seated at the table.
"Wow, look what we have in here!" Bonita says, looking at the blocks as they both take their chairs at the table. She has a small white toy car and a small red toy car in her hand that she sets down by the pile of blocks.	Keon leans forward off his chair and reaches for the white car Bonita has set down on the table. He has a small red fire truck in his left hand that he has brought with him from the children's centre. He stands beside the table and setting the white car down on the table, he begins to "drive."
Bonita remarks, "Oh, ya, you like cars, I know. Shall we do something with the cars?" She proceeds to build a small "ramp" by angling a rectangle off the edge of a cube. She places another rectangle at the end of the ramp to form a "runoff" for vehicles coming off the ramp.	Keon drives the white car off the ramp, then says something and reaches towards the pile of blocks. The red fire truck stays clenched in his left hand.
Bonita watches, making "driving noises" as Keon drives.	Keon says something as he leaves the white car near the row of blocks and takes a red pillar from the pile and sets it horizontally at the end of the runoff.
"You want another one, okay. You want another one, I see," Bonita says as she watched Keon add a block to the end of the runoff. She adds another ramp, off the opposite end of the cube that holds the first ramp.	Keon says something as he sets the white car on the red pillar he has added to the runoff.
"Is that right?" Bonita asks, watching Keon and reaching for more blocks at the same time.	Keon adjusts the second ramp.

Bonita adds a "runoff" block to the second ramp. She then asks, "Is that good?" while looking at Keon's face.	Keon smiles, adjusts the runoff block, and reaches into the pile of blocks. He places an arch on top of the runoff block Bonita has just set down.
"Nice," Bonita says.	Keon adds a blue half circle on top of the arch.
"Look at that, bigger," Bonita says then, "Look," as she adds an orange rectangle stacked on top of an orange cube to the end of the row of blocks closest to Keon.	Keon picks up the red car Bonita had set down when they first sat at the table. He closely examines the red car then sets it down on the structure Bonita has added to the row of blocks.
Bonita says while pointing to the fire truck in Keon's left hand, "What's that Keon, what is that?"	Keon says something as he transfers the fire truck to his right hand before setting it down on the row of blocks. He now has three vehicles in a line on the row of blocks.
Bonita asks again, "What is it?" then adds, "Fire truck?"	The fire truck falls off the block it is resting on. Keon says, "Whoa," and then something else as he adjusts the blocks.
"It broke down," Bonita says as she watches.	Keon tries to drive the fire truck down the ramp. He says something as the fire truck falls off the ramp.
"Oh, oh," Bonita says when the fire truck falls. She has gathered four yellow rectangles and is placing them vertically alongside both sides of the row of blocks.	Keon picks up the fire truck, moves to the end of the table, and drives the red car off the block it is resting on. The car falls to the table; he then brushes it onto the floor.
"Oh, the red car fell down," Bonita says, with her head resting on her arm as she watches.	Keon drives the white car off the table.
"The white car is on the floor," Bonita says.	Keon says something as he bends over to pick up the cars.
"Pick them up, bring them up," Bonita says.	Keon says something as he places both cars and the fire truck in a line on the table.
Bonita places two rectangles horizontally on the table in a line then looking up to see what Keon has done with his three vehicles she remarks, "Oh, look at that, that's a line."	Using the white car, Keon pushes the other two vehicles off the front of the table. He then drops the white car off the table too.
"Oh, they fell down. Can you bring them back?" Bonita asks.	Keon moves around to the front of the table to pick the vehicles up off the floor. He sets the white car on the table and keeps the other two vehicles in his hand. He moves over to where the box that

	contains the blocks is situated. He bends down to look at the picture on the side of the box and says something.
Bonita, adding blocks to the second row she has started, notices Keon looking at the picture on the side of the box, "What do you see?" she asks.	Keon says something.
"Is that right," Bonita says, leaning towards the picture, "Umm."	Keon says something while pointing to the picture on the side of the box.
Bonita turns the box so she can get a better look at the picture saying, "Ya, look at that."	Keon looks at the pictures on three sides of the box, all the while, talking and pointing.
Bonita points to one of the pictures and says, "Blocks," accentuating each letter sound, "Blocks."	Keon says something.
"No more," Bonita says.	Keon says something as he tips the box over and empties the rest of the blocks onto the table.
Nodding, Bonita says, "You dropped them down," as she watches Keon empty the box.	Keon sets the box down on the table then while saying something, bends to pick up some blocks that fell to the floor when he emptied the box.
"There's one on the floor?" Bonita asks.	Keon, now standing to the right of Bonita says, "One, two, four," as he tries to stack an arch on top of a rectangle amidst the pile of blocks.
"Oh, good counting Keon," Bonita says as she pushes some blocks aside to make room on the table for Keon.	Keon tries to stand a half circle on top of the rectangle but the structure falls over.
"Oh, oh," Bonita says as the blocks Keon is using fall over.	Keon, while saying something, places two cubes side-by-side on the table in front of Bonita.
"Yes, you did it! Nice!" Bonita says as she looks at the blocks Keon has set in front of her.	While saying something, Keon adds a row of blocks extending from the two cubes towards the corner of the table.
Bonita, while stacking blocks on the table in front of her, sees what Keon is doing and says, "Oh, oh, they're going to fall! Going to fall." Bonita points to the end of the row of blocks.	Keon rather than trying to add another block to the end of the row, stacks a block on top of the last block placed. He then adds another block on top and these blocks fall to the floor.
Bonita laughs, "Oops, down they go. Let's move them back," she says as she slides the row of blocks Keon has made away from the corner of the table.	Keon picks the blocks up off the floor then becomes distracted by the recording equipment in the room.

Bonita and Razi

Bonita	Razi
As they are entering the room, Bonita is asking Razi what he can make with the blocks.	Razi enters the room ahead of Bonita and while taking the chair further away from the blocks answers, "I can make a house for me."
Bonita misunderstands what Razi has said and so asks; "So what else can we do with the blocks if you can't make a house, what else can we do?"	While reaching towards the blocks that are spilling out of the box and bringing a red pillar and red cube towards him, Razi says, "A house for me."
Bonita repeats, "A house for you, okay; do you need more blocks?"	Holding the two red blocks in his hands, Razi sits and watches Bonita.
With her head resting in one hand, Bonita uses her other hand to draw a few blocks towards her and begins to build by putting two arches together to form an oval opening, while saying, "I'm going to build, I'm going to put this together." She then turns to Razi and asks, "So do you need more blocks for building your house?"	Razi nods, while holding the pillar in his right hand and rotating the cube in his left.
Bonita gestures towards the pile of blocks.	Razi takes the red pillar that is in his hand and stacks it on top of the two arches Bonita has in front of her.
Bonita watches then says, "You are going to use those, okay. Would you like me to move it closer?" as she point to the empty space on the table between them.	Razi nods.
Bonita moves the structure to between them, within easy reach of Razi.	Razi fits the red cube he has been holding in his hand into the oval space between the two arches.
While pulling more blocks out of the box Bonita exclaims, "Oh, that's a neat idea, Razi; it looks neat!" She than asks, "What else can we put in there?'	Razi picks up a neutral pillar that is within easy reach and adds it perpendicular to the red pillar on top of the two arches.
Bonita responds, "Ah, excellent; look at that! You are using red and brown," while pointing to the blocks.	Razi then adds a red cylinder vertically alongside the red pillar.
With her arms folded, watching, Bonita remarks, "Um, nice."	Razi reaches to the pile of blocks and draws a blue rectangle towards him.
Bonita points to the block Razi has drawn to him, and asks, "What colour is that one?" Bonita keeps looking at Razi's face and waits for an answer.	Razi says something, slides the block along the table, and places it in front of the structure.
Bonita follows the movement of the block with her finger, saying, "Blue one."	Razi slides an orange block towards him and places it parallel to the blue rectangle

	he has placed in front of the structure.
Bonita notes, "An orange, hmm."	Razi brings another orange rectangle towards him from the pile of blocks in front of Bonita and adds it to the other collection of rectangles.
"This is looking so colourful," Bonita remarks as she watches.	Razi takes another orange rectangle and first stacks it horizontally on top of the last rectangle placed, he changes his mind and places it onto the table in front of the last rectangle.
Bonita begins to say something.	Razi knocks a block to the floor then retrieves it.
Bonita points to the last rectangle placed and asks, "Razi, which colour was that one?"	Razi responds, "Orange," while he straightens up the row of rectangles then replaces the block that had fallen to the floor back onto the structure in the same position it was before.
Bonita watches, then sweeps some blocks out of the box saying, "Let's see what other shapes we have in here."	Razi reaches for the blocks and pulls three to him.
Bonita extracts an orange triangle from the pile and says, "Look at this; we have a triangle. These are neat, and look at this, a semi-circle; these are neat."	Razi adds the three blocks he has in his hand to the structure, glances at the video camera (or me), and then watches Bonita.
Bonita sets an arch on the table upside down, takes two semi-circles, places them together inside the arch, and then places another arch over the semi-circles. She leans back, smiles, gasps, looks at Razi, and asks, "Would you like to use it?"	Razi smiles and looks up at Bonita.
Pointing to the structure, Bonita asks again, "Would you like to use that?"	Razi nods.
Bonita continues, "Go ahead; take it. You can use it. Where would you like to put it?"	Razi reaches for two more blocks and adds them to his structure.
Bonita asks again, "Tell me, where would you like to put it, and I will move it over. Where would you like these blocks?"	Razi looks at Bonita then touches the front of his structure with his hand.
"Where?" Bonita asks. Pointing, she adds, "So, can you say, here, please."	Razi keeps his hand on the front of the structure and nods.
Again, pointing to the front of the structure, Bonita insists, "Can you tell me; I want the block here! You want the block there?" She cups her hand to her ear and leans towards Razi. "I can't hear you; ask me. No, okay, I'll move them	Razi still keeping his hand on the front of the structure nods again.

there.”	
Bonita slides the blocks to where Razi has indicated and asks, “Is that all right; yes or no?”	Razi nods twice.
Bonita nods her head twice, saying, “You can say, yes!”	Razi responds, “Yes!” matching Bonita’s intonation.
“Great, thank you,” Bonita says, then asks, “What else can we put in there,” while reaching into the pile of blocks.	Razi reaches for blocks and adds two more to the structure.
Bonita rests her head in her hand and comments as she watches, “Oh, neat, neat,” and then pointing at the structure asks, “What is it, is it a house, is it a, what is it?”	Razi nods twice, answers, “A house,” and then adds another block.
“A house,” Bonita repeats, “Is that your house?”	“Uhu,” is Razi’s answer.
“Who lives in your house with you,” Bonita asks.	“My dad,” Razi says as he neatens the structure.
“Your dad,” Bonita repeats, then asks, “Who else?”	“My brother,” Razi offers as he continues neatening the structure.
“Your brother; what’s your brother’s name?” Bonita asks.	Razi shrugs as he leans back and looks at the side of the structure.
Bonita shrugs then says, “You don’t know; okay. Who else, your dad, your brother, Razi, who else?” as she uses the fingers on one hand to represent the people she is listing.	“I have lots of brothers,” Razi offers, while again touching the blocks in the structure.
“You have lots of brothers, I know. How many?” Holding up two, then three fingers, Bonita adds, “You have two, three, how many?”	Razi looks at Bonita, nods, and says, “Three.”
Bonita holds up three fingers as she replies, “Three brother, ya. Do you have a sister?”	Razi nods, still touching the blocks.
“Do you know your sister’s name?” Bonita asks.	Razi shakes his head.
Bonita reaches for the pile of blocks.	Razi reaches for a block, saying, “I need more.”
Bonita repeats, “You need more,” retracts her hand from the blocks and looks at Razi.	Razi says, “My mom knows my brother’s name,” as he leans the block he has retrieved against the side of the structure.
Misunderstanding what Razi has said, Bonita replies, “Your mom cannot say your brother’s name?”	“Yes, she know it,” Razi repeats and moves the block to a different position then holds it in his hand.
Bonita nods, saying, “She knows it, ya, your mom knows your brother’s name, I	Razi nods, answers, “Nyalah,” and places the block onto the structure.

know, ya; and do you know your mom's name? What's your mom's name?"	
Bonita leans forward, her hands on her lap, takes a close look at where Razi has just placed a block and answers, "Nyalah, right, that's your mom's name, Nyalah; that's a beautiful name. What is your sis, dad's name?" She looks at Razi and waits while reaching for a block.	Razi touches the block he has just set in place, and shrugs.
"You don't know," Bonita states. "No, that's okay. I think its John. I forgot."	Razi reaches for a block and adds it to the structure.
Bonita builds a structure in front of where she is seated while stating, "I have lots of brothers too. This is going to be my house."	Razi watches.
Bonita asks while looking at Razi, "You know what I have at my house?"	Razi touches the front of his structure.
"I have a dog," Bonita states.	Razi looks at Bonita, smiles, and retracts his hand from the structure while saying, "A dog!"
"A dog," Bonita repeats, still looking at Razi.	"A big dog?" Razi asks, still looking at Bonita and smiling.
"A small dog," Bonita gestures small by bringing her hands together in front of her.	"You have a small dog," Razi repeats.
"Ya," Bonita replies, "Ya," as she looks at Razi and reaches for a block at the same time.	Razi reaches for a block, places it in the structure, and says, "It's not allowed to come to school, only at home."
Bonita shakes her head, stating, "The dog is not allowed to come to school."	Razi breaks in and adds, "He's looking after the house."
Bonita agrees, "Ya, he's looking after my house," and then sits back while adding blocks to her structure.	Razi adds the block he has been holding in his hand then watches what Bonita is doing with the blocks.
After building for a few moments Bonita asks, "Do you like dogs?"	Razi nods his head and says, "Not the big dogs, I like only the small dogs."
Bonita misunderstands and says while looking at Razi, "You like only the big dogs."	Razi clarifies, "No, only the small."
Bonita repeats, "You like only the small dogs."	Razi nods.
Bonita answers, "Small dogs, ya, ya. Sometimes the big dogs are scary, eh. They are too big." She continues adding to her structure.	Razi watches Bonita build then touches the front of his structure.
Bonita stops building, places her hands on her lap, turns to look at Razi, and asks,	Razi draws his hand away from the structure and offers, "A bus."

"So how do we get to your house Razi, do we take a car or a bus?"	
Bonita nods while saying, "A bus, yup."	Razi adds, "No car."
"No car, oh," Bonita responds, shifts the structure she is working on to a different spot on the table, then looks at Razi as he speaks again.	"We just have a car," Razi says. Razi nods and watches Bonita build.
"Okay, okay," says Bonita, while reaching for a block. "So you take the bus. Uhum, you come on the bus with mama?"	Razi nods.
Bonita, having put some blocks together between her and the structure she has built, states, "This is going to be my car to go to my house. I park it in there."	Razi sits looking at Bonita.
Bonita looks at Razi and asks, while reaching for the pile of blocks, "Would you like more blocks?"	Razi shakes his head.
"No?" Bonita says then leans forward, looks at Razi's structure, points, and asks, "Would you like to put something else in your house? This is a big house."	"A chair," Razi states.
Bonita sits forward and repeats, "A chair! How can we make a chair for your house?"	Razi reaches for a block.
Bonita pushes some blocks within closer reach of Razi. "Wow, that sounds like a neat idea to have a chair in your house."	Razi places a block on the "wall" of his house and says, "This is a chair."
"Okay, that is a chair," Bonita states as she raises her finger and says, "I think I'm going to put a chair in my house too." She reaches for a block, places it, and says, "I'm going to put a chair in front of my house so I can sit and look outside."	Razi sits watching.
Her hands on her lap, Bonita ask, "What else do you need in your house."	Razi adjusts the chair he has placed and suggests, "A TV."
"A TV; sure. So, which one is going to be the TV?" Bonita asks.	"There," Razi says, lifting up an orange triangle that is already part of the structure.
Nodding, Bonita says, "That one, the orange triangle is the TV." She then looks at Razi and asks, "Do you watch TV at home?"	Razi nods while neatening the blocks in his structure.
"What do you watch?" Bonita asks.	After a pause, Razi replies, "Spiderman," while touching the blocks in his structure.

"Ah, Spiderman, ya, that's a neat show, I like it too. Do you like any other show?" Bonita asks while returning to building.	Razi nods and reaches for a block.
Bonita continues building then asks, "Do you watch Dora?" She looks at Razi.	Razi nods.
"Ya, I watch Dora with my granddaughters," Bonita continues.	Razi watches then offers, "We have a camera."
"You have a camera at home!" Bonita exclaims as she stops building.	Razi nods.
"You're lucky, I don't have a camera at home. So, what do you do with the camera?" Bonita asks.	"Take a picture," Razi says, casting his eyes up to Bonita's face.
Hands on her lap, Bonita says, "Take a picture." She leans forward towards the blocks and questions, "So which one is going to be the camera in your house?"	"In mine," Razi says while reaching towards the blocks.
"In yours, ya. Would you like to make a camera with the blocks to put in your house? Which one is going to be your camera?" Bonita asks while pointing to the pile of unused blocks.	"That," Razi states while holding a blue block up to show it to Bonita before placing it on top of the structure. "It's far away."
"Okay, it's going to be up on top, your camera," Bonita observes.	Razi passes Bonita a block saying, "And this is going to be your camera."
Bonita receives the block and says, "Oh thank you, I'm going to get a camera too. I'm going to leave it on my chair so if something comes I'm going to take pictures outside."	Razi watches Bonita place the block then says while placing another block in his structure, "And this is going to be in there."
Bonita watches, with her hands on her lap, saying, "That blue block is going to be in there, great."	Razi folds his hands on top of the table.

They both lean forward and survey the building they have done.

Bonita looks on both sides of Razi's structure, stating, "This is a big house. You used lots of blocks building your house." She looks at Razi, points to the structure and asks, "How many? Can you count them for me? Where do we start?"	Razi point to a spot on the building.
"Here; okay?" Bonita points to the corner of the building indicated by Razi.	Razi watches.
Bonita points to individual blocks, counting one at a time.	Razi repeats after Bonita.
At each corner of the structure Bonita asks, "Where do we go from here?"	Razi indicates with his finger where to go next.

When they reach the end Bonita exclaims, "Wow, Razi you used 28 blocks, that's lots of blocks! Wow!"	Razi looks at the video camera (or me).

End

Bonita and Chata

Bonita	Chata
"Okay, look what we have in here," Bonita says as they enter the room.	Chata goes directly to the chair beside the blocks.
Bonita asks, "What are those, Chata."	"Blocks," Chata answers.
"Blocks," Bonita repeats, emphasizing each of the letter sounds.	"Blocks,". Chata says again.
"Blocks, bl, bl, bl, blocks," Bonita says this time.	Chata looks at Bonita as he empties the box of blocks onto the table.
Bonita repeats again, "Blocks."	Chata looks at the video camera (or me) then back to Bonita.
While nodding, Bonita repeats, "Blocks," one more time.	Chata has emptied all the blocks out of the box.
Taking the empty box from Chata, Bonita says as she sets the box on the corner of the table opposite to Chata, "There you did it, great! So, what are we doing with these blocks? What would you like to do?"	Chata is left with outstretched arms as the box is taken from him. He turns his attention to the pile of blocks and draws two blocks closer to him. After the box is set down on the table, he reaches across in front of Bonita, lifts the box, rotates it so he can see the picture on the side and pointing to the picture says, "Um, let's build this one."
Bonita with her head resting on her hand looks at the picture, nods, and says as she turns the box so the picture is clearly visible to Chata, "You want to build that one, okay, okay. So, what do you need to build those one?"	"I need help," Chata says as he stacks two cubes.
"You need help," Bonita nods, "Okay, I can help you. Where do we start?" she asks as she looks at the picture.	Chata un-stacks the cubes, stands up, selects an orange triangle, sits back down, and puts the triangle together with one of the cubes while saying, "We start."
"We start, uhum," Bonita says as she looks at the picture again.	Chata lifts up the cube and triangle showing it to Bonita saying, "This one a doghouse."
Bonita looks at the structure nodding and saying, "It looks like a doghouse. Dog (accentuating the sounds), d, d, doghouse."	Chata sets the structure back on the table saying, "Doghouse."
"Ya," Bonita nods, "Doghouse, (emphasizing house), hu (accentuating the h sound), house."	Chata stands, looks at the pile of blocks, brings his fingers to his lips, and then reaches for the blocks, saying quietly, "We need something."
Bonita looks at the picture on the box then repeats after Chata, "We need	Chata says excitedly, "This, this, look this one," as he points to the doghouse.

something," as she reaches into the block pile.	
"Yup, uhum," Bonita says as she places a green pillar vertically on the table in front of her.	Chata points to the block in Bonita's hand saying, "Not this one."
Bonita says while looking at Chata, "Not this one. Okay, which one?"	Chata stands and picks up two blue blocks and holds them side-by-side, saying, "Um." He sets the blocks down, brings his fingers to his lips, saying, "I don't know."
"You don't know," Bonita repeats after Chata as she watches.	Chata says something as he looks at the blocks. He picks up another orange triangle and says with excitement as he places it on the second cube beside the first doghouse, "Ah, I got it."
"You got it. What colour is it?" Bonita asks.	"Orange," Chata answers.
"Orange, um" Bonita repeats.	Chata sits back and surveys the two structures then lifts up two fingers saying, "Two dog."
Bonita lifts up two fingers saying, "Two dog."	Chata looks at Bonita.
"Are these dog or doghouses?" Bonita asks.	"Doghouses," Chata clarifies.
"Doghouses, ya," Bonita repeats.	"Ya," Chata replies before taking a blue rectangle and trying to stack it on top of the two "doghouses," saying, "We need this one." The orange triangle falls off one of the doghouses.
Bonita watches with her hands on her lap.	Chata tries again to stack the rectangle on the doghouses but is unsuccessful. He says, "Oops."
Smiling, Bonita repeats, "Oops. It keeps slipping away. Um, how you can put it in there so it stays." She begins to gesture by moving her hands towards one another, saying, "I wonder if."	Chata slides the two doghouses closer together.
"There!" Bonita praises. "Good, good; good problem solving."	Chata tries again to stack the blue rectangle on the two doghouses.
"Is it going to stay?" Bonita questions.	The attempt is not successful.
"Oh, oh, not still," says Bonita as she watches.	Chata tries to place the rectangle vertically between the two doghouses, saying "I want to make it there."
"You want to make it there, umm," Bonita nods.	Chata tries again then asks, "Will you help me?" as he passes Bonita the blue rectangle.

Taking the blue rectangle, Bonita answers, “Sure, I can help you, but you know what?” She reaches towards the pile of blocks. “I’m thinking we can put, let’s see what happens if we put a bigger one.”	Chat rebuilds the two doghouses and repeats after Bonita, “Bigger one.”
“Yup, let’s see, let’s see, I’m going to try with the little one first, I’ll see if I can put it,” Bonita says as she tries placing the blue rectangle on top of the doghouses.	Chata takes his hands away from the structures and watches.
Bonita is not successful, “Oops it keeps slipping.”	“Ya, let’s try this one,” Chata says as he reaches for the longer red rectangle in Bonita’s other hand.
Bonita repairs the doghouses then offers the red rectangle to Chata saying, “Would you like to try the big one?”	Chata eagerly accepts the red rectangle, saying, “Ya.” He places it successfully on top, brings his hands to his chest, smiles, and says, “I did it!”
“It did work!” Bonita exclaims while looking at the video camera (or me). “It made it, look at that!”	Chata looks at the video camera (or me) as he points to the structure saying, “It didn’t slip anymore.”
“Ya, it’s not slipping anymore,” Bonita says as she watches.	Chata takes the shorter blue rectangle and stacks it on the red rectangle, then adds a red pillar vertically on top. He leans back in his chair to look at the structure.
“It’s getting taller,” Bonita remarks.	Chata says, “Ya,” as he removes the green pillar, then the blue rectangle. He bangs the ends of the two blocks together then turns the blue rectangle to place it vertically on top of the red rectangle.
Pointing at the blue rectangle Bonita asks, “What colour is that one?”	“Blue,” Chata quickly answers.
“Blue, blue,” Bonita articulates.	“Blue,” Chata repeats as he leans towards the box to look at the picture.
“Ya,” says Bonita.	Chata brings his fingers to his lips, and then pointing at the picture on the box, saying, “I want to make this one.”
Bonita points at the picture then brings the box closer saying, “You want to make this one, so what do we need to make this one?”	Chata brings his fingers to his lips again, then raises his finger in the air and says, “I know, we need red,” as he begins removing blocks from the structure in front of him.
“You need red,” Bonita nods.	“Uhu,” Chata says as he stands up to reach for a block.
“Uhum, how many red do you need?” Bonita asks.	“Two,” Chata quickly replies as he sits back down.
“Uhum, and what else do you need?”	“These,” Chata says as he sets two red

Bonita continues.	rectangles down vertically on the table, in front of the picture on the box.
"These," Bonita nods then points to the picture and asks, "What comes after?"	Chata leans in to look at the picture, sits back in his chair, brings his fingers to his lips, sits forward again, points to the picture, stands up from the chair, quickly finds a neutral arch and places it inverted on the vertical rectangles.
"Ah, you found one," Bonita says.	Chata than finds another arch and places it over the first arch forming an oval shaped opening.
"That's right, Chata, that goes over there," Bonita encourages.	Chata points at the opening, says something. Jumps up from the chair, finds another arch and places it inverted on top of the second arch. "We need another one," he concludes.
"You think that small one." "Okay, see, check," suggests Bonita.	"We need another one," Chata says in a singsong voice.
"You need another one," Bonita repeats after Chata	Chata searches for a block.
"I need another one," Bonita says again as she looks for a block.	Chata continues searching.
In a singsong voice Bonita repeats, "I need another one."	Chata touches several blocks with one finger.
Bonita, touching several blocks saying, "Eennie, mennie, minnie, mo. Where is that block? Oh, I see it between a green, an orange and blue one."	"Where?" Chata asks.
"Around that area," Bonita says while pointing to the centre of the block pile.	Very excited Chata says, "Ahhh," when he finds the block he is looking for.
"You found it," Bonita shares Chata's excitement.	Touching several blocks with one finger, Chata again looks for a block, "This one?" he says when he pick up an arch.
"Uhum," Bonita says, nodding and smiling.	Chata places the arch.
"You got it, yes. Wow, this is neat. It looks like a door and two windows, oval windows," Bonita says while tracing the openings with her finger.	Chata sets his hands on his lap and looks past Bonita to see the picture on the box. He interrupts her tracing by reaching past her to point and say, "Ya, I wanna make this one."
"Okay, so what do you need for that one?" Bonita asks.	"We need green, we need red," Chata says.
"You need green," Bonita says, and pointing to the picture, asks, "which colour is that?"	"Hm," Chata responds.
"Which colour is that?" Bonita asks	"Red," Chata answers.

again.	
“Hmm, red,” Bonita shrugging her shoulders, sounding doubtful. “It looks like orange to me.”	“Green,” Chata says next.
“Green, green,” Bonita corrects his pronunciation.	“Green,” Chata repeats.
“Green,” Bonita says again.	“Green,” Chata says another time.
“Ya,” Bonita says.	“And we need red,” continues Chata.
“Ah, okay, can you find it?” Bonita wonders.	Chata searches, touching some blocks with his finger, saying something. He picks up a block and shows it to Bonita.
“That’s red, you’re right,” Bonita says.	Chata shows Bonita a green block.
“And you found a green one. You have a green one and a red one,” Bonita says.	Chata stands the green pillar vertically on top of the arches then adds the red triangle on top.
“Wow!” Bonita exclaims.	Chata points and says with excitement, “This is a birdhouse.”
“It does look like a birdhouse, yes,” agrees Bonita.	Pointing to different blocks on the structure Chata says, “This one a doghouse, this one a birdhouse, and this one a birdhouse.”
Pointing to the structure Bonita says, “You’re doing a doghouse and you did the birdhouse.”	Pointing again to different parts of the structure Chata repeats, “Ya, this one a doghouse, this one a birdhouse, this one a bird and the caterpillar is going to go right in there.”
“The bird is going to go right in there?” Bonita questions.	“No,” Chata responds.
“Who’s going right in there?” Bonita asks.	“Caterpillar,” Chata answers.
Throwing her head back Bonita responds, “Caterpillar, that’s a good idea, caterpillar’s going to go up there too, wow!” Then while using her fingers to keep a record says, “So its going to be dog, a bird, and a caterpillar house.”	Chata tries to add an orange triangle to the top of the structure but it falls off.
“That’s great, three creatures live in the house,” says Bonita.	Chata places two orange triangles in the oval openings of the structure.
“Neat!” Bonita says.	“These are cars,” Chata says of the orange triangles.
“These are cars,” Bonita repeats, clearly articulating the letter sounds.	“These are cars,” Chata repeats.
“These, es, es,” Bonita says	“These are cars,” Chata says again.
“Okay, ya, how many cars you have in there?” Bonita asks.	“Two,” Chata answers.
“Two, yes. Which colour are your cars?”	“One,” Chata responds.

questions Bonita.	
"Yes, that's one, but which colour is it?" asks Bonita.	"Orange," Chata answers.
"Yes, its orange. And this one?" asks Bonita.	"Two," Chata replies.
"Yes, two, there are two, two orange cars," Bonita says while holding up two fingers.	Chata bangs two blocks together.
"So what else can we do? You are making sounds with the blocks," Bonita remarks as she takes two blocks and knocks them together.	"Ya," Chata answers.

Chata then tries to make a "man" out of the blocks. When this is unsuccessful, he turns to showing Bonita how to make levers to catapult the blocks into the air. Bonita follows his directions and asks him for information about how to make the catapult work. When the structure he has made is knocked over, he rebuilds it. Bonita occasionally helps with the placement of blocks or in offering direction to find the right block, but for the most part, she sits with her arms on her lap offering verbal encouragement. She continues to correct his speech as the session continues. When the structure has been rebuilt, Chata directs Bonita in tapping horizontal blocks resting on the table with a set of blocks being held in their hands like drumsticks. He then decides to build Bonita's house. He repeatedly tries to have Bonita understand a particular word, but is unsuccessful. He knocks together two blue half circles, and enjoys the sound they make. He calls Bonita's attention to this, and she picks up two rectangles and begins knocking them together. Bonita questions whether the two sets of blocks sound the same, before the session ends.

End